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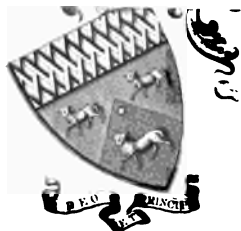


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REMAINS

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM JACKSON,

LATE RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, LOUISVILLE, KY.

WITH A BRIEF SKETCH OF

HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

BY REV. WM. M. JACKSON.

New-York:
STANFORD AND SWORDS,
NO. CXXXIX, BROADWAY.
1847.

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NOTE.

For a volume like this, a Preface were unnecessary. It speaks for itself. It is now sent forth, with the humble prayer, that the many friends who have solicited, may reap all the gratification and profit which they have anticipated from its publication.

THE EDITOR.

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MEMOIR.

M E M O I R .

THERE are some men whose biographies are emblazoned, on almost every page, with the record of bold adventure, or startling incident, or proud achievement. There are others, whose whole history will scarce furnish a single deed of "vulgar greatness." The life of the one, is like the flow of the Rhine, on which the traveller's eye is continually greeted with historic scenes and castellated towers ; with beetling cliffs and baronial halls ; exciting at every turn of its meanderings emotions of wonder or delight. The life of the other, is like some noiseless stream, which wends its way through a quiet landscape ; calm, even, and almost monotonous in its flow ; with scarce an object of interest to arrest the traveller's eye, but irrigating many a thirsty field, bearing upon its bosom many a freighted bark, and diffusing thousands of blessings in its progress.

It is not incident, it is not achievement, but character, which imparts value to a biography. The former may impart an absorbing interest, and yet leave it utterly worthless ; and so, on the other hand, character may be developed where there is nothing of the bold or the amusing, the marvellous or the chivalric, to embellish or enliven the narrative.

And such is the character which these pages attempt to delineate;—and the task is undertaken, not only to supply a necessary appendage to this memorial of the departed, which has been so urgently solicited by attached and afflicted friends; but to exhibit, what the writer, from an intimate acquaintance, cannot but regard as a very complete and symmetrical character of a Christian minister.

But he approaches the task with diffidence; not on account of its magnitude, for it will be little more than a profile;—not that his pen is loathe to execute the task, for to sketch the character of a relative so revered, so beloved, were delightful work: but lest with this theme in hand, he may be unable to portray it with that impartiality, without which, history becomes fiction, and the privileges of the biographer, the mere fancy-sketches of a limner. So many sweet memories of the past cluster around, exhibiting the character before him in so many varied aspects of more than ordinary excellence, that he fears to trust himself with the delineation. Upon the sketches furnished by others, better qualified than himself, he will mainly draw for the materials of this unpretending memorial.

The Rev. William Jackson, was born at Tutbury, in the County of Stafford, England, on the 30th of January, 1793. It was his happiness to be born of parents who had the fear of God before their eyes, and the religious training which he received at their hands was doubtless an important means of moulding the character which he afterwards exhibited. To this, the society he was in the habit of meeting at his father's house, likewise contributed, consisting, as it did, of clergymen and others, amongst whom were many eminent for their piety and usefulness, such as Legh Richmond, the Rev. Mr. Cotterill, (who was at one time their beloved vicar,) and others whose names are well known in

the religious world. But perhaps his ministerial character received its strongest impress from the faithful teaching and lovely example of his beloved and excellent friend and pastor, the Rev. G. W. Hutchinson. This gentleman was the grandson of Gov. Hutchinson, the last colonial governor of Massachusetts. His early and lamented death, and remarkably devoted and exemplary life, were portrayed in a short biography which appeared in England soon after his decease. For his memory Mr. J. cherished, to the last day of his life, a lively affection and deep reverence; and ever spoke of him as one, whose spirituality of character, blamelessness of life, and almost incredible abundance of parochial labors, constituted him, next to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, the model he desired to follow. In a letter to a friend travelling in England, he thus refers to him.

“And so you have been to Tutbury—that spot ‘beloved by me o’er all the world beside.’ Many are the pleasing recollections, connected with that place, to me. There I was born, and there, I trust, I was born again—there my father and mother lie, and in that old church, my spiritual father lies. When you visit it again, do go to their graves for me. My dear father’s prayers, and dear Hutchinson’s preaching, were instrumental, under God, in bringing me from darkness to light, from death to life. I may never stand over their mortal remains, but I expect to meet them where ‘mortality is swallowed up of life.’ The former would be a pleasure, but it would be a joy mingled with tears; the latter would be unmingled delight, for in that blest world all tears are wiped away.”

Very early in life he became impressed with a sense of his guilt and danger as a sinner;—and his fondness for reading and study being remarkably strong, he was very

naturally led to the selection of some of the most valuable works of sacred literature. But the Bible and the "The Pilgrim's Progress," were his favorite companions. The latter he had read through seven times before he reached his twelfth year. His mother used to tell him that "it was an excellent book if he could but understand it." "So foolish was I," he remarked at a maturer age, "that I thought I understood every word of it: but experience has since taught me, much more effectually, how difficult it is to travel through the world like a pilgrim, and like a good Christian, to fight the fight of faith."

Of his early youth we have but a brief history. Against the baleful contamination of ungodly friends, not even the vigilant eye of most anxious parents could protect him. It was his misfortune to be thrown much in the company of associates, by whom religion was denounced as fanaticism and the Bible a forgery. The poison of infidelity was soon infused into his bosom, so that the early age of fifteen found him, to use his own expression, "a rank deist," disregarding, as a cunningly devised fable, all that pious parents had taught him. But the same word which arrests the flowing tide, with this interdict, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," arrested the progress of evil in that youthful heart. His outward life was invariably correct, manly and honorable. No mortal ear ever heard from his tongue an oath, a lie, or an obscene word; and yet, as he afterwards remarked of himself, "I was ripe for any sin. But I was still preserved. I could not break through the restraints which were upon me. The eye of good and strict parents, and the eye of a better God were upon me." "In that state of youthful apostasy," he remarked upon another occasion, "my heavenly Father did not long leave me. Often did my conscience smart under the pangs of guilt.

My scepticism could not bear the test of solitude, but it recoiled upon me with a terrible shock in the lonely walk and hour of darkness." A providential circumstance, for so we are compelled to regard it, just at this time threw in his way a copy of "Jenkins on the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion," and that book was the instrument for "dissipating his foolish cavils, and of establishing him in the faith of the Gospel."

Deeper convictions of guilt now grappled with his conscience,—and waters of a bitter cup were wrung out of him. His path for a time lay through clouds and thick darkness, but eventually the light of peace and joy broke upon his mind, and he felt himself called upon both by duty and inclination, publicly to arm himself on the Lord's side.

Cloud and sunshine, joy and sadness, marked many of the subsequent years of his Christian life,—to which the alternations of hope and despondency, respecting his entering the ministry, largely contributed. His attention had first been seriously directed to this subject by the Rev. Legh Richmond, during a visit to his father's house ;—and soon it became the mark of his highest and holiest ambition.*

* The circumstances which introduced Legh Richmond to the family of Mr. Jackson's father, are somewhat singular. About the year 1807, a celebrated impostor arose in England named Ann Moore, but most commonly known as "The Fasting Woman of Tutbury." Appealing to her capability of existing without food or drink, in attestation of her pretensions, this woman claimed to be an especial favorite of heaven, and a messenger of God. For several years, her story was widely credited throughout the kingdom, the deepest interest was every where excited in her case, and many men of intelligence and professional distinction, permitted themselves to be imposed upon by her pretensions. Her power of abstaining from food was too easily credited, and too easily believed to be miraculous. The evil to the cause of true religion became too manifest, not to excite the deepest solicitude in the minds of Christian people. Accordingly Legh Richmond came

The very obstacles which appeared to lie in his path, only served to increase the strength of the desire, and to confirm the fixedness of his purpose, and yet there was manifest the most sincere desire to follow whither the leadings of God's providence should conduct him. Some unpretending lines, which were written about this time, sufficiently exhibit the state of his mind upon this subject. . . . They are transcribed more for the sentiment than for the poetry; the last verse especially, as expressive of that sweet and humble acquiescence in the allotments of God's providence, which every laborer in His vineyard has need to feel. They are headed—

A DESIRE FOR THE MINISTRY.

One thing have I desired,
 For that my soul shall seek,
 A breast with holy zeal inspir'd,
 A mind adorn'd and meek.
 An understanding large,
 Experience, pure and deep,
 Then from my God a sacred charge,
 To feed his chosen sheep.
 I lie in Jesus' hand,
 Passive, I wait his will,
 Ready to run at his command,
 At his command—stand still.

forward, with a strong arm, determined to avert the evil, by exposing the imposition. A committee, consisting of thirty-three clergy and gentry, of which Mr. Jackson's father was one, with Sir Oswald Moseley at their head, was appointed to investigate and bring to light the facts of the case. The woman consented to the watch, which it was determined to place upon her. All nourishment of every kind was excluded from the room which she occupied, but finally overcome by exhaustion, she was compelled to acknowledge the imposition. During the period of this investigation, Mr. Richmond tarried beneath the roof of Mr. Jackson's father, and there became acquainted with him in his early youth, and seriously urged upon his consideration, the question respecting his entering the ministry.

For an account of this impostor, see *Life of L. Richmond*, chap. 10. *Goode's Book of Nature*, Lect. 12, and *Dunglison's Physiology*.

To the bosom glowing with youthful zeal, and eager for *work to do* in the service of Christ, it is a bitter trial to be laid aside, uncalled for, or thrust back by opposing difficulties ;—and when in the ministry to be allotted to some narrow corner of the vineyard, with scarce scope enough for the full play of its energies :—but let that be his maxim,

“ Ready to run at his command,
At his command stand still.”

Remembering always that station can never confer character ; that labors are not to be measured by their results, so much as by the manner in which they have been performed ; that they who “ stand and wait,” as effectually accomplish God’s purposes, as those who are commissioned to the achievement of His glorious purposes ; and that all His appointments are in wisdom and in love.

The difficulties which, to Mr. Jackson’s eye, obstructed his entrance into the ministry, were imaginary rather than real : and yet they served to test his sincerity, to prove the steadfastness of his purpose, and, eventually, to prepare him for the sacred work. God may often determine to bestow blessing, but He chooses his own time. Delays are not denials ; and if he bestows not the good which we desire, as soon as we could wish, it is because some greater good is to be accomplished by withholding than by giving. “ Clouds of difficulties,”—says a fragment of his diary,—“ seemed to intervene between me and my desired object. I thought I was too young to judge rightly upon so important a subject, and that my desires arose from improper motives. Accordingly I made up my mind to relinquish my studies, and wrote to Mr. Hutchinson, informing him, for the first time, of the hopes I had cherished, stated the difficulties, and my determination to forbear the pursuit. He wrote to me encouraging me to persevere, and that he

doubted not my way would be made plain. I opened my mind to several ministerial friends, who all gave me encouragement which I was willing to take. Many times I endeavored to stifle my desires, (God grant it may not be laid to my charge, by Him from whom all holy desires do proceed,) but they always returned with redoubled vigor."

In this hour of perplexity he addressed the following letter to his mother, whom he venerated, in which he exhibits his present state of feeling, and his filial deference to her superior age and wisdom :—

" Tutbury, July, 1812.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I scarce know how to open the subject upon which duty and necessity require that I should consult you. 'Oh! that I had the pen of a ready writer,' that I might give it its due weight. Were I addressing a parent who was a stranger to the inestimable value of the Gospel, who never frequented a throne of grace, who had no eye to Providence, and whose affections clave to the things of this world, despair rather than hope would have possession of my mind. But I hope better things of you, my dear mother, and doubt not you will make what I have to say a matter of earnest prayer, that we may neither of us act indiscreetly or contrary to the will of divine Providence. However my desires may at first meet with your disapprobation, or may be esteemed by you worse than madness, yet, I beseech you, consider attentively what I have to say, and after having laid it before God, I cannot but believe you will think differently of it. If it should meet your decided opposition, I shall feel it my duty to act conformably to your will, and shall regard it as an evidence that Providence frustrates my designs. But oh! my dear mother, beware lest you

should be found fighting against God—beware lest you should hinder the cause of Christ. Unless you are aware, as I think you are, what are my inclinations, you will no doubt wonder what all this can mean. Without further preface therefore let me state the case. After it had pleased God to call me by His grace, out of nature's darkness to the great and marvellous light of the gospel—*marvellous* indeed hath it been to me!—my heart's desire and earnest prayer was, and has been ever since, that I might have the spirit within me “perfecting me for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” My prayers as yet appear ineffectual, and nothing in Providence has yet transpired to direct my course either way, except that I feel increasing zeal and stronger confidence, that in His own good time God will open the way. Many a time have I checked my presumption, as I then thought it, and presumption it must be, did the success of the undertaking depend on the sufficiency of the creature. A cloud of difficulties appeared at once in view, and still continues, or I should have communicated with you sooner. Were I not well assured that the governance and ordering of all things are in the hands of a Supreme Being, I should despair of ultimate success; but believing this, however cloudy Providence may appear at present, I cannot doubt that He will yet bring me by a way that I have not known. . . . Indeed I cannot, nor do I think I ever can, wholly relinquish the desire, unless a sense of duty to the manifest calls of Providence shall compel me to it. It is impossible for me to know certainly the divine will in this matter without consulting you, and I trust your advice will prove to be the dictate of a higher power.

“My dear parent, I am well aware of some of the objections you will raise. You will say that I cannot possibly

be spared from the business,* and that it cannot be carried on without me. But what! my dearest mother, cannot the "Lord be better to you than ten sons"? Has He said it and shall He not do it? If He has designed me for this great work, and you should prove a stumbling-block in the way, may I not prove a curse to you rather than a *blessing*? Remember how the anger of the Lord was kindled against the Philistines when they detained the Ark of the Lord. Are you unwilling to make a sacrifice so small? Look at the example of Abraham, which was recorded for our admonition, perhaps in this very matter. He was commanded to sacrifice Isaac; he does not urge the great things that depended upon the life of his son, but *immediately* obeys the word of the Lord; and though it seemed to threaten him with unbearable truths, yea, even to frustrate the promises of God, he *hastened* to do it. And mark how in the end it proved to be the bringing down of fresh blessings on his hoary head. Remember, too, the name the Patriarch gave the place "Jehovah Jireh," "*The Lord will provide.*" And who can tell but that the very event which you think would tend to heighten your difficulties, may prove a very blessing, for the Lord never calls upon His people to make a sacrifice but He pays them double for it. Does my dear mother pray, "Thy kingdom come," and will she not make the least sacrifice for it? Does she "pray the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers into His vineyard," and will she not suffer her son to go and work? Does she complain that our churches are so void of Gospel preachers, and would she prevent a most unworthy one, to whom I trust is given a manifestation of the spirit, from proclaiming "Glad tidings of great joy, liberty to the captive, and the

* The supervision of an extensive manufactory, now by the death of his father devolving upon himself and an elder brother.

opening of the prison to them that are bound?" Can she bear to see so many fellow-immortals perishing in their sins, and so few to warn them to flee from the wrath to come? Can she bear to hear them crying, "What must I do to be saved," and so few to direct them to Christ? Can she bear to see so many perishing for lack of knowledge, with none to direct them in the right way? Consider, my dear mother, the value of their souls to themselves, to God, to the Church, to yourself, and I am persuaded you must think favorably of my request.

"My dear mother, I have felt it my duty thus frankly to lay open my feelings to you, and to beg your most serious consideration of this important subject. If Providence shall frustrate my designs I am willing to submit, but I cannot think He will. These are not the desires of a few hasty moments, but have been the subject of much prayer, reflection and conversation. They do not arise from discontent, for I would not change places with any man in the world, unless it were for the glory of God. No man is more happy than I am in every respect.

"That the Lord may direct and influence us both, is the earnest prayer, my dearest mother, of

"Your affectionate, faithful son,

"W. JACKSON."

For some reason his mother did not see fit to reply to this letter;—probably she felt unwilling to assume the responsibility of advising him at the present time,—especially as he devolved it entirely upon herself.

In consequence of his mother's silence and his own misgivings, he relinquished, as he thought, forever, the dearest desire of his heart. Imagine a youthful bosom bereft of its most fondly cherished hope, weeping over the disappointment of his dearest anticipations—that was the sad condi-

tion of his. "Nothing," he says, "seemed to go well with me; my soul languished, and the good seemed to have failed me in all things. I still, however, continued to wait upon God in my poor way. Thus I passed a tedious winter; but the returning spring brought with it brighter days; old hopes, old desires, old inclinations and old resolutions returned." In his Diary for August 10, 1815, there is the following record. "This night, after attending the monthly meeting to hear the missionary accounts, and feeling my heart warmed by them with missionary zeal, I found courage to communicate to my dear mother for the first time, personally, my intentions. I thank my God, she received it apparently very well, and only expressed that reluctance which a tender mother naturally would feel, in the prospect of separating for ever, in this world, from her child. The way opens and the view brightens; may my zeal increase, and may I be made daily more fit for the work by a continually deepening heart-knowledge of the truths I would communicate."

But the great question with him was not yet decided. His mind continued in the same unsettled state,—fluctuating between an anxious desire for the sacred work and a total abandonment of the idea. In the Spring of 1817, an elder brother, who had been on a visit to England returned to America, and Mr. Jackson was induced to accompany him. During this visit, the cloud which had so long hung over him disappeared. The wide field of usefulness which this growing country presented—and the great demand for laborers to cultivate it,—permitted him no longer to halt and doubt. He felt that his work was here. The field was white to the harvest and he could no longer vacillate. Accordingly the Fall of the following year found him pursuing

his studies under the Rev. Mr. Henshaw, his friend and pastor, who had just been called to the rectorship of St. Peter's Church, Baltimore.

Shortly before his ordination his Diary says,—

“April 29th 1820. Notwithstanding all, how kind has Providence been to me ! Many things have appeared to me a tangled maze, yet His wisdom and goodness unravel the whole. I think I may say, the things which have happened unto me have fallen out to the furtherance of my cause. If the kindness of my God, in leading me to this long desired work, be any pledge of His blessing upon my labors, it will be my happiness to number many souls in my crown of rejoicing.”

Thus it will be seen that God throws difficulties in the way of some, whom He intends to honor as His ministers, in order to try their sincerity, and to prove the vigor and steadfastness of their zeal. And most wisely does he adapt those difficulties to the condition, the circumstances, and the disposition of those whom He intends to prepare for this work ;—and we doubt not, that those who have been called to encounter these obstacles, in their way to the Gospel ministry, regard them as a most important part of their training for its duties.

May 12, 1820, two days before his ordination, he writes :—“ I am utterly astonished when I think upon such a treasure as the Gospel being committed to such an one as myself. It almost terrifies me when I think of the awful responsibility which lies upon an ambassador for Christ :—that he has not only to watch for his own soul, but for the souls of others,—not only to account for himself but for others,—and if the people err through his misguidance, it will be required at his hands. ‘ Who is sufficient for these things ? ’ ”

May 14th, 1820, he was ordained to the Diaconate, by the Right Rev. Bishop Moore, of Virginia, in St. Paul's Church, Alexandria, D. C.

Soon after his ordination he was called to the rectorship of St. George's Parish, Havre de Grace, Maryland. During his ministry of two years in this place, he was permitted to see the fruits of his labors, in the revival of the parish, and in the edification of those committed to his charge. At the expiration of this period, when ordained priest, he was invited to the rectorship of St. Paul's Church, Chester Town, on the Eastern shore. "The rectorship of that Parish," says Bishop Henshaw, "had been filled by a succession of old men, such as Smith, Kewley, Turner, and Wilmer. But Mr. Jackson was rapidly growing in intellectual power and professional ability. With a steady zeal which no discouragements could abate, and a patient industry which knew no relaxation, he devoted himself to the various duties of his high calling. His sound and well balanced mind commanded the respect of the most intelligent, and his humble and unostentatious piety, the reverence of the most thoughtless; while his benevolent activity as a pastor, and his attractive powers as a preacher, increased the number of his flock, so that under his ministrations the parish acquired a degree of prosperity higher, probably, than it had ever reached under the most distinguished of his predecessors. His parochial connection in Chester Town, was one of the most agreeable that can be conceived of. He often spoke of it with warm gratitude; and no doubt, many who now enjoy the permanent fruits which by God's blessing resulted from it, will cherish his memory with fond affection. During his few years residence on the Eastern

shore of Maryland, he was constantly acquiring an increasing influence in the Diocese, and was more than once elected a member of the Standing Committee.

Early in the year 1827 he was called to the rectorship of St. Paul's Church, Alexandria, D. C., which had been vacated by the removal of the Rev. Dr. Wilmer to the Presidency of William and Mary College. In this new position he soon won the affection and confidence of his large congregation, became highly popular as a preacher, and his assiduous labors were crowned with eminent usefulness and success."

More than once did the congregation give evidence of more than ordinary interest in spiritual things. Who of that flock indeed, what episcopalian of that city will forget the Spring and Summer of 1831?

In the month of May, during Mr. J.'s absence at the Convention in Norfolk, the deepest seriousness was manifested at one of the stated meetings of prayer. The services on that occasion, in the lecture-room of St. Paul's, were conducted by two beloved brethren of the seminary, who in their exhortations, urgently enforced upon the crowded assembly, the importance of prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. For two months this seriousness appeared to increase; no other than the ordinary means of grace being resorted to,—viz., the Sunday services and the weekly lectures. The congregation of Christ Church, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Charles Mann, equally shared with St. Paul's this blessing of the Spirit of God. The two congregations mingled their prayers and praises, and the two pastors delightfully co-operated in their Master's work. None will forget the services of that Summer. The lecture rooms were invariably crowded, and the students

Chas. R. Lamb

from the seminary, finding it good to be there, availed themselves of every opportunity of attending.

All hearts grew warmer and warmer. The duty of prayer for God's blessing on the Church, was continually kept before the people,—nor was it without effect. Many a fervent supplication, we doubt not, arose from the people of the two congregations, and God, in infinite goodness, determined speedily to return the answer.

In the month of July, the annual examination of the students at the seminary and the ordination of the senior class took place. That occasion drew together numbers of the surrounding clergy ;—and the rectors of the two churches, determined to avail themselves of it, for the purpose of holding extra service. These were conducted chiefly by the late Dr. Bedell, and the present Bishop of Rhode Island ; the latter of whom preached the ordination sermon on the morning of the Sabbath. St. Paul's was crowded to overflowing. In the evening, the candidates for confirmation, forty-five in number, gathered around the chancel of the same church. It was a sight on which angels must have delighted to gaze. All hearts that night were lifted up in thanks to God, for his gracious manifestations. But how did every bosom swell with increasing gratitude when, towards the close of the succeeding day, (Monday,) it was known that numbers of others had applied to their respective pastors to be admitted to the rite of confirmation before the departure of our venerable bishop. It was accordingly determined to protract the services until Wednesday, the clergy continuing their attendance, until not less than thirty had been counted. On the evening of that day, St. Paul's was again crowded to overflowing, and at the same chancel, where, but four days before, forty-five persons had knelt to

renew their baptismal vows, forty-five others were seen, crowding around to perform the same solemn obligation. There was no excitement during all this time. A deep solemnity pervaded the congregation. No new measures were resorted to. The simple preaching of the Word, accompanied by prayer, was the means of gathering in the harvest, where the stated pastors had so faithfully sown.

During his residence in Alexandria, Mr. Jackson was enabled to co-operate with energy in the various benevolent institutions of the Church, but from his connection with the "Society for the Education of Pious Young Men to the Ministry," and the Theological Seminary of Virginia, his chief energies were enlisted on their behalf. In both these institutions he ever felt the liveliest interest, nor did it in the least degree abate to the last hour of his life.

In the Spring of 1832, he was called to sunder the tie which united him so closely to his flock in Alexandria, and to the whole Virginia diocese. In a letter to a friend, after describing the delightful services of the convention, which had just closed its session in Alexandria, he says: "You will be sorry to learn that a circumstance occurred which well nigh deprived me of the pleasure of the above exercises. Just before the Convention met, I received another communication respecting St. Stephen's Church, New York, containing a flattering call to the rectorship of that Church. It would intrude itself when it ought not. Immediately after our meeting, a delegation from there came on to see me. All my brethren, out of Virginia, thought it my duty to go, and urged very strong reasons, the force of which I was compelled to admit. You will readily conceive that my mind was much, very much perplexed;—after much thought and prayer however, I replied in the negative

trust there has been no selfishness, no shrinking from labor and sacrifices, no fear of man to influence my decision. You will see at least that we are not *eager* to leave Alexandria.

“ Since writing the above, another communication has been handed me from St. Stephen’s ; I have neither time nor spirits to enter into the particulars of its contents;—suffice it to say, that as before I dared not accept their call, now it is backed by so many arguments, from several quarters deserving consideration, that I have not courage to refuse.”

* * * *

In his farewell sermon he remarks—“ My dear hearers, I do in the sincerity of my soul, believe that the hand of God beckons me away. If I had *sought* the change—if personal friends had effected it, and the well-wishers of our Zion had dissuaded, I should not *dare* to move one step. But when the contrary is the fact—when strangers whose faces I know not seek me, when so many of the best and wisest, and most disinterested say, ‘ Go,’ when their advice is backed by weighty reasons, reasons drawn from the general good of the Church, I *dare not refuse*. I dare not allow a peaceful, happy diocese, most ardently beloved bishops, delightful associations, an affectionate and kind people, to detain me. When God calls, with the Patriarch, I would leave all and go to the place which He shows me ; and like him, I would go in faith, believing that it is for good to me ; for good to those to whom I go, and for good to you my beloved brethren, from whom I go, and from whom I would not go, did I not think the great Head of the Church would have it so.”

St. Stephen’s, although it had been successively favored with the ministrations of Bp. Moore, Dr. Feltus, Dr. Anthon,

and Dr. Hawks, was now, from a concurrence of adverse circumstances, in a state of great depression. The congregation was scattered and divided; the Sunday school broken up; so that it was truly the collecting together of a dispersed flock, and the recommencing of every good work among them; but when in the Spring of 1837, he relinquished it for his field of labor in the west, he left it thriving, prosperous and united; a full church, a flourishing Sunday school, and every means of usefulness and Christian benevolence in active operation. In this congregation his efforts were nobly seconded and sustained by a small band of devoted, praying and working Christians; some of them, probably, the fruit of Bishop Moore's memorable labors among them. For these, Mr. Jackson ever retained the warmest friendship. Of this number, was the excellent and lamented Dr. Willet, whose name recalls to the mind of all who knew him, an embodiment of the most lovely Christian graces.

On his return from a delightful visit to England, in 1837, in consequence of much public speaking after having contracted a cold, that affection of his throat and voice first made its appearance, which afterwards frequently threatened such serious consequences. On this account his friend Dr. Willett gave his consent to his removal to the more congenial climate of Kentucky. On his way to his new field of labor, a circumstance occurred, which tended greatly to strengthen his faith, while it deeply affected his heart. He had been advised, and he felt it important to cease altogether from preaching, after relinquishing his charge in New-York, until he entered upon that in Louisville,—this he attempted to do, but in visiting among his old friends at the East, previous to his departure, it seemed impossible for him to resist their solicitations to preach at

least one sermon in each place. The consequence was, that when he reached Ohio, his voice was entirely gone, so that for a week or two he could not speak above a whisper. This was a dark cloud in his path, overshadowing all the bright prospects of proclaiming the Gospel in the great valley of the west. He was well persuaded that a father's love was in it; but what it might portend for his future usefulness he knew not. In writing to friends in New York, allusion was made to these darkened prospects, and by the time he reached Louisville, no less than three different proposals reached him, from those authorized to make them, to fill important posts of usefulness, which would give entire rest of voice. He was greatly overcome by this fresh instance of the great goodness of God in blessing him with *friends indeed*, who, if one door of usefulness should be closed, stood ready, as instruments in His hands, for opening others.

It was from a conscientious sense of duty that Mr. Jackson was induced to remove so far from his early friends and associations. The ties which bound him to the scenes of his former ministry, and the many sweet friendships which had grown up wherever his lot had hitherto been cast, rendered this removal to the west a trial which none can realize, but those who have been called to experience the same.

Shortly after his removal to Louisville, and mainly through his instrumentality, the erection of the noble edifice of St. Paul's, which had been commenced, but abandoned on account of the derangement of the financial concerns of the country, was again undertaken, and Mr. Jackson had the great gratification of contemplating in one of the most imposing specimens of church architecture beyond the moun-

tains, and in a Christian temple which would have done credit to any of the Atlantic states, the zeal and liberality of the people to whom he ministered.

In his first sermon, preached in St. Paul's, he says :

"It is with no ordinary feelings of pleasure and gratitude to God, that we review the rise and progress of this edifice, and the formation of this new congregation. As no noise of hammer or axe was heard in the temple—so, all here has been marked with peace and harmony. Seldom does the history of a parish present a more beautiful specimen of division without discord. Usually places of worship are multiplied through strife—to the dishonor of our nature, and *not* of our religion, be it said—but in this instance, we believe it to have been from a sincere desire to extend the influence of true religion, and lengthen the cords of our Zion, which are '*Beauty and Bands*.'

"Those who have been fellow-worshippers with us, but who, for various reasons, remain in the old sanctuary, have, we believe, wished us God-speed ; and our prayer is, that their hive may speedily be so replenished, that they may send forth another colony as strong as this. May peace and prosperity be within our respective walls ; and may Christ Church and St. Paul's be one, as Christ and Paul were one, that all the passers-by may see, that we are intimately united branches of one Catholic and Apostolic Church."

The labors of Mr. Jackson, during his residence in the west, were crowned with the happiest success. From the large number of strangers by whom Louisville was continually visited, and from the almost daily intercourse between that city and every part of the south and south-west, and from the attractive beauty of the church of St. Paul's, and

the still more attractive eloquence of its pulpit, by which strangers were drawn hither on the Sabbath; the word of the Gospel which was there proclaimed, excited an influence far beyond the bounds of that congregation. But within the limits of his own fold, Mr. Jackson found every thing to comfort and cheer a pastor's heart. There was nothing which could have induced him to sever the tie which united him to that devoted people, unless indeed it were some absolute necessity, or some imperious call of duty which he dare not disobey. When he was earnestly solicited to permit his name to be pressed for the Episcopate of Indiana, he most warmly discouraged the idea; and it was his wish, expressed more than once, that "rather than be called to the thankless and self-denying duties of a western bishop, he would pray that he might first be taken to his Master's more immediate service in heaven." That event was nearer than his most watchful friends anticipated.

During a visit to Cincinnati, whither he had gone in the month of November, 1843, to attend the first semi-annual meeting of the American Bible Society, and by the request of the Board in New York, to deliver an address on the occasion, he contracted a severe cold, from which he never after entirely recovered. His labors from that time, though in much bodily weakness, were in undiminished faithfulness and zeal.

During the winter he had been delivering a course of sermons on the 3d chapter of Proverbs;—the last four he ever preached being from the 17th verse, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness." The congregation of St. Paul's love to dwell upon them, not only as a delightful subject, most strikingly and feelingly enforced, but as peculiarly

appropriate for the last words of one, whose whole life had so remarkably illustrated their truth. The ways of wisdom, which in early life, he had been led to choose, were most emphatically to him "ways of pleasantness and paths of peace." The continued feebleness of voice arising from the affection of his throat had led him seriously to apprehend a long, if not an entire relinquishment of his ministerial labors. He continued however to toil on with such strength as he possessed.

On the evening of Thursday, Feb. 15th 1844,—the day preceding that on which he was attacked by that fatal blow from which he never recovered—he was on a social visit to one of his parishioners. In the course of conversation, some remarks were made on the silly and superstitious idea that the morrow, Friday, was an unlucky day—"I have always been surprised," said he, "that superstition should have selected that day as unlucky. To me it is the best day of the week, next to the Lord's Day. I always think of it as Good Friday; the day on which the greatest good was accomplished for our sin-ruined world. If I regarded days in this way at all, I would sooner select than avoid Friday, for undertaking any great work."

Viewed in connection with the events which followed, these remarks might almost appear ominous;—for on the following day, Friday, the mortal arrow struck his frame and arrested his labors. On the Friday of the succeeding week, he entered into the joy of his Lord. During the whole of the intervening time he was speechless, though not entirely insensible. The painful anxiety and the agonizing state of suspense, in which that most devoted people were kept during the whole of this time, may be more easily imagined than described. On Sunday prayers were offered up for his recovery, and affectionate allusions

to his illness, in their sermons by the ministers of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist and Roman Catholic churches of the city, and that without any solicitation or suggestion on the part of Mr. Jackson's friends. Four young men, the fruits of his ministry, who were pursuing their studies preparatory to the ministry, at Shelby College, came down to attend at the sick bed of their spiritual father. Two of them walked the whole distance, 30 miles, that day, and were among those who watched at his bed-side the whole night.

The scenes of deep solemnity and interest, which for one entire week, were presented in that chamber, will never be erased from the recollection of those who witnessed them. On Thursday it was very evident from the flickering of the flame, that it would soon expire. But there was no struggling with the King of Terrors ;—none of the agonies of a dying-bed. Gradually the light waned away,—growing feebler and feebler,—until at day-dawn, on Friday the 23d, he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. One present, expressed the language of all hearts there,—

“ Happy soul, thy days are ended,
All thy mourning days below ;
Go ! by angel guard attended,
To the sight of Jesus—go ! ”

Bishop Smith commended the departing spirit to Him who gave it, and who redeemed it from the power of the grave, in the appropriate words prescribed in “ The Visitation of the Sick.”

During that whole long night his bed was literally surrounded by anxious friends. The Bishop and Mrs. Smith, the five young candidates for the ministry whom he was wont to call his “ sons,”—his brother, and the wife who, for

twenty-three years had been the companion of his pilgrimage, together with several other intimate friends, scarcely for a moment forsook his bed-side. The awfully solemn stillness was only interrupted at intervals by the Bishop, with prayers and hymns suitable for that hour when the soul, hovering between two worlds, was "just on the edge of bliss."

The gentlemen who first heard the alarm of his attack, found him in his study chair with the Bible and an unfinished sermon opened before him, and his spectacles beside them. It had evidently been his last employment to pen an earnest message to his people from Prov. iii. 18. "*She is a tree of life,*" &c.—urging upon them in view of eternity, to choose wisdom's ways. "The advantages resulting from our holy religion in time, are great; but it is in view of eternity that it comes to us, clothed in all the grandeur of thought and words and reality. Did our being cease, when the vital current ceases to run through our veins, we might leave every man to follow the devices of his own heart and that which is right in his own eyes. But O! eternity! eternity dwells upon our thoughts. I can no more divest myself of the idea of eternity, than I can divest myself of a consciousness of my existence. Methinks, my dear hearers, that we might ring this one word in your ears until you were driven from your sins to lay hold upon the hope set before you in the Gospel. Did you ever think seriously on eternity?"

"By eternity then, by an eternity of happiness, we demand your attention to your own salvation. It is Solomon's last, great argument, and it shall be our's. With this, we shall take our leave of this precious portion of God's word."

Thus far had he written, when the voice came,—

"Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy lov'd employ!"

The eternity which was in his thoughts soon burst upon his view,—and by this startling providence was not eternity sounded in the ears of that panic-struck congregation by the voice of God himself, as no human tongue could have sounded it?

Truly may it be said of him,

“His sword was in his hand,
Still warm with recent fight;
Ready, that moment, at command,
Through rock and steel to smite.”

With equal truth may those other lines apply—

“Bent on such glorious toils,
The world to him was loss,
Yet all his trophies, all his spoils:
He hung upon the Cross.”

Of his death and funeral, one obituary notice gives the following account. “Although the health of our dear, lamented brother had been slightly impaired for years, yet no painful apprehensions were entertained of an attack so suddenly fatal, as that which prostrated him, speechless in a moment, and left him languishing almost entirely helpless and senseless for nearly a week, until He who gave him being, and who redeemed his soul, granted him a gentle release from this world and a most joyful admission into a better. With one exception, of a far less marked character, this was the first death of a clergyman which has ever made a decided impression upon this community. And to persons at a distance, it is difficult to convey any idea of the depth or universality of that impression, in the case of our lamented brother. All knew that he was greatly and generally respected and beloved. But to what extent, never could have been known, had it not pleased God to draw forth the expression of these feelings in a most

remarkable manner. The suddenness of the attack, the extent to which sympathy and aid became necessary just during the brief period when sympathy is continually deepening; the occurrence of the funeral on the Lord's Day afternoon, the weather being uncommonly delightful for the season, all tended to produce an impression so intense and universal, that it may almost literally be said, that his funeral was attended by the city of Louisville. St. Paul's, which is a large and noble church, was filled to overflowing,—aisles, around the chancel, galleries and all, nearly an hour before the arrival of the corpse and the mourners. Hundreds surrounded the door, and crowded the side-walks, for whom admission was quite impossible within the walls of the church. And when the procession did move, it was preceded by whole masses of the population, crowding both side-walks half a mile in advance of the hearse, which was followed by mourning friends, afflicted parishoners, and a sympathising community, on foot and in carriages, to a length little short of a mile. And yet the utmost stillness, decorum and seriousness were every where manifested. It literally seemed impossible that any man, in the short space of six or seven years, could have drawn and bound so many hearts to himself."

In the following sketch of Mr. Jackson's character, the author avails himself of the delineations of others, which are more true to the life, than any which his own pencil could portray. From motives of delicacy, moreover, he prefers thus to group together what others have drawn, whilst at the same time he deems it but due to the Church, that witnesses uninfluenced by the partiality of kindred relationship, and therefore more worthy to be heard, should testify to the character of her ministers.

Bishop Henshaw has drawn the outline of his character, with a correctness, in which every one has seen the resemblance to the life.

“As a man, Mr. Jackson was of a calm and equal temperament; not liable to high excitement or deep depression—bland in manners, amiable in disposition, steady in his attachments. He had a mind characterized by solidity and judiciousness, rather than brilliancy,—of practical, rather than speculative power: and without any vain ambition for fame in the arena of literature and science, he sought to have an intellect well furnished, and consecrated all his attainments to the work of his sacred profession.

“As a *Christian*, he was enlightened and rational, and at the same time, fervent and devout; in him there was a happy mixture of cheerfulness and gravity, of humility and confidence, of love to God and benevolence to men. He had zeal without fanaticism, and order without formalism. He seemed in all his religious feelings and actions, to maintain the *via media* between two vicious extremes. While he rested his hopes of salvation exclusively upon the grace of God through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, he looked to have those hopes sustained and realized, only through the appointed *means*, by holding communion with God, in the ordinances and institutions of his Church. He cherished no hope, independent of the promises of the covenant, and attached no value to any faith other than that which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.

He was a sound and decided *Churchman*, free from obnoxious *ultraisms*. He had no sympathy with those, who, professing ardent love for evangelical *doctrines*, look with distrust, if not aversion, upon those safeguards which God has provided in the Church and her institutions, for the

preservation of their purity, and the increase of their efficacy. Nor could he fail to censure those, who, professing an ardent attachment to the Church system, deem it proper to repudiate all that is called evangelical in sentiment and practice; as if men would derive much benefit from the candle-stick when the shining light, which it was made to support, has been extinguished; or attach great value to the casket, when the precious jewel it was designed to preserve, has been thrown away! His was a steady and enlightened approval of the truth and order of the Church,—of the form and power of the Gospel. But in him, firmness of principle had no alliance with bigotry; and while he sincerely condemned the errors of those who dissent from our communion, he wished grace, mercy, and peace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

As a *Preacher*, Mr Jackson was argumentative without dullness; earnest without extravagance. He aimed to enlighten the understanding, with the doctrines of the Gospel; and at the same time to move the affections, by its motives and appeals. He dwelt upon the great fundamental truths of Christianity. The sinfulness of man—the love of God—the redeeming work and offices of Christ—free justification through faith in his merits—the agency of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of the heart—the necessity of repentance and a holy life—the importance of the means of grace as instruments of our salvation—the solemnities of judgment—the joys of heaven—and pains of hell,—these were the leading topics, to the illustration and enforcement of which his pulpit discourses were devoted. The end of his preaching was the salvation, rather than the approbation of his hearers; to win their hearts, not their applause."

Those who enjoyed the most intimate and familiar ac-

quaintance with Mr Jackson, will verify the accuracy and truth of this delineation. Often has the writer of this memoir remarked that he never knew a man more entirely free from all desire for human applause. His first, highest, and holiest ambition was to make full proof of his ministry ; and in all things, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, and by the word of truth, to approve himself as the minister of God.

Christ with him was the first and the last—the beginning, the middle, and the end of all he preached, and all he lived for. He never aimed at being great ; but he always strove to render his sermons interesting and profitable. A rare talent for bringing out of his treasure, things new and old, enabled him to enliven every discourse, to simplify every topic he handled, and to give point to every truth he presented. The beauty and appositeness of scriptural illustration, as exhibited in all his sermons, renders them models in this particular. To display logical skill, or scholastic research, or critical acumen, never formed any part of the actuating motive in his breast, when he sat down to the preparation of a sermon. He preached for eternity and for the souls of men ; and he preached believing that every sermon accomplished the purpose whereunto it was sent. To a brother in the ministry, he once remarked, that he never went into the pulpit but with this full conviction, and this fact accounts for the unction and fire by which all his sermons were distinguished.

“ Rightly to divide the word of truth,” was an holy art of the Gospel ministry, in which he exhibited admirable skill. He could scarcely be said to have had a favorite subject. In every page of God’s Word he saw Christ, and

Him crucified, and as he learned Christ there, so did he study to exhibit him to the eyes of his people. With indefatigable labor, did he endeavor thoroughly to instruct them in all things which were "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Nothing which he undertook, was slightly performed or lightly touched. We find among his written sermons and addresses, five on the miracles of Christ; nineteen on the liturgy of the Church; eighteen on the epistles to the seven Churches, besides complete series on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Confirmation, and other topics of pulpit instruction.

As a Pastor, his zeal and fidelity are remembered with gratitude by every congregation to which he ministered. In all the various departments of pastoral duty, he manifested such lively interest, that it was difficult to perceive which lay nearest his heart. The joyous greeting with which his visits were welcomed, by the lowliest as well as the loftiest of his people, his cheerful and animated conversation, intermingled most judiciously with graver and more serious topics of discourse, seemed to have indicated the field of pastoral labor, as that for which he was most pre-eminently qualified. Whereas, to have heard him in the pulpit, in the lecture room, the Bible class, or the Sunday school,—at the missionary, tract, or Bible meeting, to have witnessed the easy and felicitous manner in which he performed the duties appropriate to each, it would have appeared as if either of these departments of the ministerial work, were his peculiar forte. But the components of his ministerial character, were too happily balanced to allow any regard to any one department of his work, which required the neglect of any other; and hence it was that his

parishioners scarcely knew where they most delighted to see and hear him. If there was any one field which secured a larger share of his interest than another, it was the Sunday school. The following extract from a letter will explain the cause of the peculiar care and solicitude with which he tended these nurseries of the Church. "It has been my happiness to pass through all the grades of a Sunday School, from the lowest form to the highest chair, and I bless God for it. There, I learned the first principles of our holy religion—there, the truth first made its way to my heart, and kindled within me the inquiry, what must I do to be saved ? there, my single talent was first employed ; and there, I conceived the noble desire, to be more extensively useful in the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. And if it shall at last be found, that that desire has in any measure been realized, it must all be traced back, under God, to a Sunday school in a distant land, founded and conducted by my own venerated father."

In a letter to an absent member of his family from one of his early parishes, he writes : "Yesterday I organized the male Sunday school entirely alone. In the afternoon I was assisted by Col. C——, and Mr. W——. Mr. E——* and myself had previously waited upon many of the poor families. So far from objecting to send their children, as was anticipated, they in general appeared to be highly delighted. We commenced with twenty-four boys I trust it will be the beginning of a good work among them. Some of them are fine boys, and appear to be pleased with the idea of coming to school. My first object was, to impress upon their minds the things they were chiefly to learn—the

*All of these gentlemen were members of the bar ; one of them afterwards became a senator in Congress ; and two of them now hold distinguished places in the judiciary of the State.

importance of those things, and how much their present and eternal happiness depended upon them."

Again—"Sunday, 22d : attended Sunday school—myself again the only teacher—twenty-seven scholars."

Can we be surprised that a minister who would thus personally labor, should always have been blessed with thriving Sunday schools? He rarely failed, during the whole course of his ministry, to visit every Sunday, those schools in his larger parishes, when it was unnecessary for him to be a regular teacher; it was his habit to go from class to class, teaching and talking to the children, as time might permit; and every month he catechised, questioned, explained and addressed all the schools, and children of the congregation.

So deeply interesting did he render these catechetical exercises, that they were listened to by the adult members of the congregation, with the liveliest interest and profit.

We have often thought that if the parochial clergy would qualify themselves better for this department of their work, rendered obligatory by the express requirement of the Church, but alas, too often neglected—the happiest results would be witnessed both in children and their parents: for surely a more thorough, complete, and admirable compend of Christian faith and practice, can no where be found than in the Church Catechism.

In his "Classes of Catechumens," as he styled them for want of a better word, he also manifested the liveliest interest. These were composed of the baptized members of the congregation, who had never ratified their sacramental vows. The classes were formed some weeks previous to the episcopal visitation; frequent and special times of

meeting being appointed ; the young men, the young females, and the older persons, each assembling in their respective classes. His object was to exhibit their serious responsibility as regularly initiated members of the Church, and solemnly to enforce the obligation of renewing their baptismal vows, in the rite of confirmation. This he did, by exhortations to the whole assembled class, and by private conversation with each member separately by himself :—and the success which crowned these delightful exercises once led him to remark that he had found the enforcement of the obligations of baptism, to be one of the most effective appliances of his ministry.

In the various departments of Christian benevolence, his heart and hand went forth with uncommon zeal, and, indeed, with uncommon *effect*. The obligation of contributing according to the ability which God gave, he regarded as no less incumbent upon himself as a minister, than upon Christian brethren of the laity. From the very earliest period of his ministry, he solemnly consecrated, as the minimum of his contributions, one-tenth of all his receipts to benevolent objects. His charity account, which was never seen, during his life, exhibits not only a faithful and conscientious but liberal appropriation of the consecrated portion of his income. The force of his example was thus added to the precepts, which he so frequently and urgently gave upon this subject. The following letter from one of his New-York parishioners will illustrate this :—

“It rejoices me to hear that your efforts in the cause of systematic benevolence have met with so good measure of success. If your people do not learn all about that matter in your school, it will not be for the want of an experienced and faithful instructor ; and if any should be disposed to

consider you as binding 'heavy burdens,' they can never bring the concluding part of the charge, and say, that you 'will not so much as touch them with one of your fingers;' for I have sometimes thought, you used the whole hand, and not unfrequently applied shoulder and all.

"Well, after all, there is nothing like example in these matters—this business of '*Go ye and do,*' cannot give half the impulse that is imparted by '*Come ye, my brethren,* let us all be up and doing in the great work of the ingathering of souls to the fold of Christ.' "

In every parish, in which he labored, his preaching and example produced a manifest increase of Christian benevolence amongst the people—and in all, or nearly all, it is believed, some individuals are to be found who adopted and still continue to follow his principles and practice in this particular.

He gave his hearty sanction and co-operation, to every enlightened effort for the glory of God and the good of man, and advocated their cause on their respective platforms. His services on these occasions were in constant, at one time, almost in *daily*, demand; and he was frequently sent for from home to organize, and represent different societies. In 1836 he was appointed a delegate by the Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society; the American Bible Society; the American Tract Society; the Prayer Book and Homily Society of Maryland, to their kindred institutions in England. He accordingly represented the three last named and addressed the respective annual meetings held in Exeter Hall in May of that year. Owing to some inadvertence the credentials from his own loved missionary society did not arrive in time for him to have the privilege of appearing in its behalf.

Of the American Tract and Colonization Societies, he was ever a firm friend ; when in New-York taking the place of the lamented Dr. Milnor, in the Committee of Publication of the former society, whenever his absence, or any other cause, rendered it necessary. He encouraged the plan of monthly distribution in all his churches. It was his habit once a month, to cause to be placed in every pew in the church, a tract, which he selected, either from the American or Episcopal Tract Society, generally with reference to the subject of his sermon ; this he would urge upon their attention, in the hope of deepening, in the retirement of their homes, any impression that might have been produced in the sanctuary.

In the Colonization Society he was an active member of the Board and Executive Committee, in New-York and other places where he resided.

But the *Bible*, *Missionary* and *Education* societies, and *Sunday* schools were the objects nearest his heart. From his first parish in Harford county, where he was chiefly instrumental in forming their first Bible society, till the day of his death, he was President, wherever he resided, of a branch of that noble institution, except in New York, where he took an active part as member of the Board, of the Committee on Agencies, &c. of the parent society. In their annual Report for 1844 his death is referred to in a manner which shows their appreciation of his services.

No sooner had he felt the love of God shed abroad in his own heart, than his interest in the cause of missions commenced as a natural result. His interest in this noble enterprise never flagged. During the whole of his ministerial career, he held monthly meetings for imparting missionary intelligence to his people, and for exciting their zeal in a cause so near his own heart. He was a member of the

Foreign Committee of the Board of Missions so long as he remained in New-York. It was his delight that his house should be the home of the missionary ; and when he left New-York, there was not a missionary from our Church in foreign lands (with perhaps one exception) who had not sojourned under his roof. One writes :

“ The sad tidings of the death of my beloved Christian brother was most painful to me ; for although so long separated, and so far away, I never ceased to remember my unnumbered obligations to him. My affection for him surpassed that which I felt for any of my Christian brethren in the ministry, as my obligations to him were greater ; and I shall never cease to esteem it a gracious direction of Providence, which led my steps to him, during the days of my preparation for the ministry. To his counsels and his prayers I owe more than I can express. But my *friend*, my *companion*, my *brother*, is gone *home* ; and, ere long, it will come to my turn also. Oh, may it be to hear the ‘ well done, good and faithful servant ’ of our everlasting Judge.”

Another says : “ I have indeed felt myself one of the bereaved ; for he, who is not ‘ lost but gone before,’ was not only dear to me as an affectionate, revered friend, but doubly so as my spiritual father, to whose instrumentality I owe all my hopes of happiness both in time and in eternity. Though I had little expectation that we should ever meet again in the flesh, it was delightful to me to feel, that we were united in spirit ; and to know that his child in the Gospel was often remembered at the mercy-seat which he so loved to approach.”

Nor did the domestic missionary, who came within his reach, share less of his kind sympathy and consideration. One writes :

"He was indeed a brother whom I dearly loved. Never shall I forget his warm-hearted sympathy, and his constant readiness to uphold my hands in —— parish."

A former secretary of the Foreign Committee, referring to his missionary spirit, thus writes ; "Rarely did my connection with the committee for some seven years bring me in contact, in any part of our Church, with any one, whose interest in missions, seemed so clearly and immediately to spring from the love of the Saviour. There was a simplicity, an unvarying warmth in his affections on this great subject, which appeared to absorb all minor points, in the desire to see the Gospel extending its blessings over the earth. In the African and Greek Missions, he felt a peculiar interest, strengthened by a personal sympathy for several of our Missionaries to those lands. On going to the west, he carried with him all his interest ; and notwithstanding the pressing wants around him, his parish often gave substantial testimony to the faithful efforts of their pastor in behalf of yet more destitute regions abroad."

A rapid glance over the pages of Mr. Jackson's ministerial history, may excite some surprise at the frequency of his removals. It certainly was remarkable, and so, he always thought it, that one by nature and education, so averse to *change* ; one who was wont to cling so fondly to old associations, and who became so wedded to his home and to his parish, should have so frequently been led to change his sphere of labor. It is unquestionably a practice generally to be deprecated, and in which Mr. Jackson never desired his example to be followed. He often advised his brethren in the ministry against it. In his own case, it never was done without a struggle, often deeply painful ; nor without much prayer, deliberation and consultation ; and a full conviction on his own mind, that so the Great Head of the

Church would have it. Numerous indeed were the calls he received from different parishes, which he unhesitatingly declined; but those which he accepted were backed by such weighty reasons, and urgent appeals from clerical friends, that he felt he dared not decline. On one such occasion he remarked: "Every step of the way I have trod upon thorns. This I can say, I have the testimony of a good conscience, and that is enough. Events may safely be left with God."

The following paper is one among the many proofs of the careful deliberation with which he weighed every contemplated change of his field of labor. It is the copy of a loose paper found among his manuscripts:

1. It is lawful and sometimes expedient for ministers to change their field of labor. But it is an important step and therefore not to be done lightly and upon every call.

2. An unanimous and pressing invitation is one intimation of Providence to accept.

3. A prospect of comfort and usefulness, especially if it be *obviously* a wider field, &c.

4. If judicious ministers and Christian friends advise it.

5. If the post occupied be a discouraging one, either from the coldness of the people, defections, or lack of usefulness.

6. When health requires it.

7. When support is not afforded.

8. When the peace and prosperity of the congregation require it.

May a Minister ever leave a congregation when none of these reasons require it?

May a Minister make a change because he prefers one place, or section of the Church to another?

What are not sufficient reasons to justify a change.

1. It is not, *alone*, a sufficient reason that the field occupied is not an agreeable one ;
 2. Nor that the people are not interesting and intelligent ;
 3. Nor that we have not many *conversions* ;
 4. Nor that the people to whom we are invited are importunate.
-

In no one instance was Mr. Jackson induced to abandon one charge for another, from mere personal feeling. The prompting of his heart in every case was *stay*. But when from solemn convictions of duty he did enter upon a new field of labor, he threw his whole heart and soul into the work which it devolved upon him.

He identified himself with his people, and consecrated all his powers to their spiritual welfare. "His deep piety," says the obituary notice already quoted, "his fervent zeal, his sound judgment and discretion, his fidelity as a pastor, his power as a preacher, and the beautiful consistency of his example, insured for him the respect of all who knew him; and enabled him to exert a salutary influence, which was felt, not only in the city of his habitation, but throughout the limits of the diocese with which he was connected. Seldom has a clergyman who occupied so many stations as our departed brother did, been able to preserve in all a character so elevated, a reputation so unimpeachable, a ministry so uniformly successful."

His whole character appeared to exemplify, as far as the frailty of our fallen, nature would permit, the beautifully drawn portraiture of a minister of Christ.—

“ Give me a priest these graces shall possess—
Of an ambassador, the first address—
A father’s tenderness—a shepherd’s care—
A leader’s courage which the cross can bear—
A ruler’s awe—a watchman’s wakeful eye—
A pilot’s skill, the helm in storms to ply—
A fisher’s patience—and a laborer’s toil—
A guide’s dexterity to disembroll—
A prophet’s inspiration from above—
A teacher’s knowledge—and a Saviour’s love.”

LETTERS.

LETTERS.

On Marriage, &c.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“You will perceive by the dimensions of the sheet which you have just unfolded, that my intention is to send you a long letter. Whether it will be realized, depends, however, upon many contingencies;—*ordinary* calls I shall dismiss, *extraordinary* ones may compel me to send you at last blank paper; but should it be so you will know the cause. I devote a portion of my time to you, my friend, in this way, because I am persuaded that you earnestly desire to receive ‘instruction in righteousness.’

“The question I have to answer is, ‘whether a believer may marry an unbeliever?’ By a ‘*believer*,’ of course, I mean a Christian in heart and in truth, and by an ‘*unbeliever*,’ one who has only the name. I answer most unequivocally, in my opinion, *No*. Our appeal however must be to the word of God, for I acknowledge no other rule of conduct. The original law given to Israel, the ancient Church of God, is against it. ‘Thou shalt make no marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.’—Deut.

vii. 2—5. Equally explicit is the law to the Christian Church. The Apostle limits us in marriage with this one restriction, 'only in the Lord.'—1 Cor. vii. 39. Again—2 Cor. vi. 14. 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship,' &c. The examples of holy men of old is against it. Let one prominent instance suffice. When Abraham was old and well stricken in age, with the solicitude of a good parent, he is desirous to see Isaac settled in life; and with more commendable solicitude still, he is anxious to see him married in a way becoming a servant of God. And he said to his servant—'I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, but thou shall go' &c.—Gen. xxiv. 1—4. How the wonted prudence and piety of the good old man show themselves in this transaction! He did not reason as many do in this day of clearer light, many who claim to be the children of the Father of the faithful; 'There is no harm in marrying an idolater,—perhaps by his influence and persuasion he may convert her, and make her a worshipper of Jehovah.' He knew too well the proneness of the human heart to turn aside from God, to indulge such a hope. He does not instruct his servant to look out a wife for Isaac that was *rich*, or *beautiful*, or *accomplished*; but she must be a *worshipper of the true God*. He was content to sacrifice his only, his beloved son on the altar of God, but he was not content to sacrifice to the unrighteous Mammon; and those who imitate not him in this respect, may well question whether they are partakers of 'like precious faith.'

"Nor are the instances of aberrations from this rule less to the point. Marriages between the 'sons of God,' that is the godly, and the 'daughters of men,' that is, the chil-

dren of this world, were the cause of that universal apostasy from God, which was followed by an almost entire destruction of the human race.—Gen. 6 chap. Solomon's marriage with heathen women turned aside his heart, and Ahab's marriage with Jezebel, and Jehoram's marriage with Ahab's daughter, brought ruin on their families, and distress on the nation. It is in vain to oppose these references by saying, that no one contends for the marriage of Christians with idolators; for all who love not God are His enemies, and have set up their idols in their hearts. The nominal Christian who loves the world, is not less an abomination before God, and not less dangerous as a companion, than a pagan. But, independently of the Scriptures, even reason, were it allowed to speak, would throw all its weight and influence against such incongruous alliances. While all consider good temper, amiable manners, prudence and good sense, as holding a very important place in the qualifications of a wife; surely piety, which is in fact the pearl of great price in a woman, must not be placed in a secondary scale. He is but a poor Christian who would say that he cannot live with a petulant woman, but that he could live with one without piety. He may *hope* that he may be instrumental in her conversion, but what reason has he so to hope? Why not convert her before the knot is tied?

“The truth is, if we may judge from facts, the probability is on the other side, for we are naturally more prone to evil than to good. But if the evil should be escaped, it must result in much pain and mutual unhappiness, for ‘How can two walk together except they be agreed?’ how can an unconverted wife sympathize with a converted husband? How can she be a help-meet for him in his most important cares and concerns? How can she direct him and go with him to a throne of grace? And how can such a husband

love such a wife, supposing her all beside that heart could wish? 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies.' Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22. No doubt the Psalmist has reference to their *character*, not to their *person*. Those Christians who are content to marry one living without God in the world, in effect say, that they want a help-meet in every thing but religion; they want a partner to share all their joys, but their — joy in God; they want one to go with them every where but to a throne of grace, and to heaven. They desire to live together as they can in this world, but when death parts them, they care not to see each other again for ever. On the principle which I have advocated, and on this alone, can marriage reasonably be expected to be happy. Many more arguments might be adduced, but enough has been said, I trust, to insure your attention to the subject; and if ever you are blessed with a wife, my dear friend, that you may find one with whom you can 'so live together in this world, as in the world to come to inherit life everlasting,' is the prayer of

"Your sincere Friend,

"WILLIAM JACKSON."

To the same, on the same subject.

"What a bane to many a believer's happiness is an unequal yoke! They who venture have no right to promise themselves any share of real felicity; they have a right to expect what befel the Israelites in their unlawful marriages, fearful and perpetual displeasure; they have a right to expect what befel Solomon, *apostacy from the faith*; they have a right to expect, in the common adversities of life, such

counsel as Job received, '*Curse God, and die.*' They have a right to expect at the very best, a fearful and eternal separation; and if aught can infuse into the cup of heavenly pleasure, any alloy of grief, it will be this, that the beloved partner of my bosom is writhing in perdition, and mingling his or her cries amongst the howlings of the damned.

"It is to be presumed that the one who is a child of God, will teach and admonish the other; and will it not be a fearful thing at another day to stand as a witness against them at the eternal bar. Oh! it is treading upon enchanted ground; the Christian may sleep and lose his soul, or he may fall into an enemy's hands, at all events he will mar his peace. It is a common expectation that a change may be effected; but what right have they to suppose such a thing? it is like looking for a divine blessing upon an overt act of wickedness—a command is broken, "*Marry only in the Lord,*" and I had almost said, they impiously hope their Dagon will fall before the ark of God; it may be so but not in adoration, it will in all probability, be in dreadful ruin. My friend Mr. Richmond says, he has not known such hopes to be realized *one* time in *fifty*. In such a union, there is every thing to forbid the increase of affection. Christian love there cannot be, and natural affection will always increase the danger or add poignancy to future prospects."

To a Friend, on entering the Ministry.

"Alexandria.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"The subject of your last two letters would afford me matter for more paper than my present engagements will allow me to fill. The simple questions, on which you

so earnestly ask my opinion, are respecting your *call* to the ministry, and your *fitness* for it, upon either of which, I have not, if my recollection serves me, ever yet expressed myself; partly, because I deemed it desirable that time should test your disposition to the work; and partly because in so important a step, I would have you act independently of extraneous influence. Perhaps I have erred, perhaps it was my duty to have said more towards bringing your mind to a decision. I rejoice that without this, the matter still presses with so much force upon your mind. Now you have brought it before me in such a shape, that I feel bound to give you my views. My settled opinion is, that it would be highly dangerous for you to banish your present feelings: not one in ten who enters the ministry, has so few *difficulties* to encounter. As to your *fears*, some would vanish the moment the decision was made, and to *others*, divine grace would enable you to rise superior. As to your *qualifications*, I should consider them sufficient; not indeed to justify your entering at once into the sacred office, but abundantly sufficient to sanction the hope, that under a judicious course of study, you might become a respectable and useful minister of the everlasting Gospel.

“While we raise the standard to its due pitch, we must remember that no man is bound to begin with *ten talents*, but he is bound to improve his *one* talent, until it becomes, if possible, *ten*. We are not to look for perfection in those who minister at God’s altar, for they are men subject to ‘like passions’ and infirmities with others; but they must ‘grow in grace,’ and keep the body in subjection. No man indeed, ought to think of this work, unless he has something of a ‘*spiritual character*,’ has made some ‘*spiritual attainment*,’ and possesses some portion of ‘*spiritual gifts*.’

“The first, is at present the main point for you to consider : and having settled this, as I trust you can, the other two will advance by study, prayer, temptation, and labor in your Master’s cause.

“In reference to your *call*—the work is in itself a good one, you have the desire, that desire has increased, and when stifled, has returned ; and springs, I hope, not from the love of ease, or popular applause, but that you may *do good*. You have sufficient talents ; Providence has given you the means to accomplish the end in view ; and few I presume, have better evidence that they are inwardly moved of the Holy Ghost, to take upon them this office. For my part, I can discover no just pretext, why you should not put your hand to the Gospel plough, while there are many reasons why you should. Look at the *World* lying in wickedness ; look at our *Country*, with a population fast outgrowing the increase of clergy ; look at our *Church*, the very Church established upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being its chief corner stone ; and the only Church, as I conceive, that promises *unity* and permanent *purity* in doctrine, with at present, a very small band of ministers. Then look into *Eternity*, where they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as stars for ever and ever. With such considerations before you, say if you would not be acting in consonance with the mind and will of God in cherishing that desire.

“My last advice is—make it your prayer to Him, whose you are, and whom you strive to serve, that if your desires are agreeable to his will, He would make your way plain before you ; but if not, He would obstruct your path by some dispensation of His wise providence.

"The bad writing and many blunders, will show you that I have written in great haste.

"Your sincerely affectionate friend and pastor,

"WM. JACKSON."

"Self denial and the service of God are inseparable: it is by our sacrifices, especially in things *lawful* but not *expedient*, that our sincerity is brought to the test—'Now know I that thou lovest me, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son,' &c., said God to Abraham. And perhaps, when you are brought to make *sacrifices*, any and all sacrifices for the Gospel's sake, then God will make your way plain before you; and possibly it is to bring your mind to this, that He has so long delayed. Am I wrong in conjecturing, from certain expressions in some of your letters, that there is yet another idol to be cast away? My friend has sometimes used the words, *reputation, respectability, brilliancy, &c.*, in connection with this subject, in a manner that leads me to suspect there may be something wrong in these respects. *Usefulness* is the great, the leading object we must have in view; and to this end we must be content to sacrifice *self* in every shape and form. It must be our business to employ to the best advantage we can, the talents we possess, with this single aim in view, to benefit man and to glorify God. I know what danger there is in the particulars just mentioned, I believe it is a snare Satan endeavors to throw around every minister, I may say every Christian; and if he succeeds, he at once defeats our efforts for usefulness. You will I am sure excuse my plain speaking; if my conjecture is wrong, yours is a singular case."

"*New-York*, March 23, 1835.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"If it were not before me in black and white, I would not believe that more than a month had elapsed, and your letter not answered, when it was my full purpose to reply to it immediately. But I have excuses that you will admit, for during the last three weeks I have been so unwell as scarcely to be able to write what was necessary for the pulpit, and the season of Lent brings with it, you know, a large increase of public duties. Yesterday, I felt quite well again, and a portion of to-day I have allotted to you, though my plans were well nigh foiled. Callers began at breakfast. It is now five o'clock, and this is the first moment it has been in my power to put pen to paper. We had heard, of course, of Dr——'s death. It does not surprise me that that event has called your mind afresh to the work of the ministry. It is natural and right that it should do so, for when those we know are called to render their account, it should prompt the inquiry, 'Am I about my proper business?' It will be a fearful thing either to be found idle, or busy in the wrong place; both of which I am sure you would deprecate. But 'you know not what to do.' I have thought much on your case. You know hitherto, my advice has been to *wait*; the obstacles you have met with have seemed to direct this course. It was always my opinion that * * * was one of the steps in Providence to set you free; and now you may, I conceive, with perfect propriety, take one step forward. If, after looking at the matter again, in all its bearings, with earnest prayer to God for His direction, you find it in your heart to give yourself to that good work, I should then think it right and proper

to pledge yourself to the Great Head of the Church, and inform your friends that such was your determination.

* * * * *

“ The question that here arises is, ‘ Would it be right to take so decided a step ? ’ I think it would, on the ground that your age justifies you in determining your own path of duty—that your plans are still prospective, and that, by so doing, you will expose no one to any loss or trouble.

“ Perhaps, also, a few more grains of the same grace would enable you to overcome the difficulties you feel in regard to extempore prayer, &c.

“ Indeed, my dear friend, you must overcome that feeling, at least in the family circle ; you should do violence to yourself in such cases ; this is our mode of crucifying the flesh. Self-confidence may carry us through any such duty with some credit among men, but self-distrust, humility, confidence in God, and a determination to shrink from no obligation, will much more commend us to His approbation, whose we are and whom we serve. Let me observe, however, that *preparation* for extempore prayer, is just as proper as preparation for extempore speaking. A general train should be marked out in the mind, somewhat in the following order : *adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, intercession* for others, conclusion. The mind will sometimes dwell and enlarge more upon one particular than another. At times it may be expedient to be very brief, or else altogether to omit some, especially in social meetings, where others probably have, or will, make such points the subject of their prayers. *Always be short.* Most fail in drawing out their prayers to too great length. You will find it a great advantage to store your mind with the language of the Prayer Book ; and a greater advantage still, to realize your

own wants, the necessities of those with whom and for whom you pray—and the *presence of God*.

“Other duties require me to close. Mrs. J. unites in kindest regards. Farewell, my dear friend, may the Lord direct your steps, prays

“Your sincere friend,

“WILLIAM JACKSON.”

“*New-York*, April 10, 1837.

“My first impulse on the receipt of your kind letter, my ever dear friend, was, ‘I will write immediately.’ I wish it had been done, and by this time I might have had another of your welcome letters. Thus it is that we are always losers by procrastination. But if Madam Rumor has been as busy as she usually is, your kind heart has found an apology for this long silence. Soon after your’s of January 23d came to hand, matters of deep and very absorbing interest were brought before us. I refer to a call from Christ Church, Louisville. From the very first my mind was deeply impressed with a sense of its importance. The distance is so great that I could not visit it; our only mode therefore of obtaining information was by writing; and if you could have thrown any light upon our duty, you would not have remained till this time without a letter. ‘Self-interest,’ you know, ‘sways the best of minds.’ The information we have obtained from all quarters, clergy and laity, in the Church and out, interested and disinterested, all say—go, and we go. The call is accepted, and on the 2d of May, D. V., we leave New York, visit Alexandria and Virginia, and then wend our way to the west, where I trust, with the blessing of the Great Husbandman, we shall find

a field as fruitful, as it is extensive—then shall we reap a rich harvest indeed. We hear many things that are very pleasant of the congregation, though I trust, indeed I am sure, this is not the motive that actuates us. How I wish that you could be a fellow-laborer with us in that vast valley! But, that old business of yours, ‘not yet freed from its entanglements.’ Well, perhaps it is all right; and I fear the present times do not favor your emancipation. And you have entered on your 30th year, but *not* on ‘the down-hill path.’ There may be time enough yet to do a good day’s work; it is not so much the *time* as the diligence used, that makes a good and faithful servant. We made as good a voyage in seventeen days out as we did in forty-seven on our return; and many a man does as much work in a short life as others do in a long one, and they may have as rich a reward. You remember the servants who entered the vineyard at the eleventh hour, received every man a penny, and those who entered at the first received no more, so you need not be discouraged that the Master has not yet hired you. Now, though I have not complied with your condition of answering your letter *soon*, yet let me have all your thoughts on this subject, with as many *knotty* questions as you please, and it shall be my endeavor to solve them. But, can you not come and let us talk them all over?

“I have so many things to say about our visit to England, to dear Tutbury, &c., which was all that is delightful; but my head and hands are too full to add more than that

“I am, as ever,

“Your affectionate friend,

“WILLIAM JACKSON.”

Extract.

“We find Louisville all that we anticipated, and have only one objection to the place, and that is, its remoteness from all that we love. But the great Head of the Church has sent us here, as I believe, and we must endeavor to do our duty in that state and place to which it has pleased God to call us. Do you not subscribe to this? I know you do. ‘But,’ you will ask, ‘how may we know the state and place to which God does call us? And does this doctrine forbid us to desire a change? By no means, if we have a right end in view. But even a right motive will not justify us in *forcing* a change. David had a good object in view, and was undoubtedly influenced by right motives, when he prepared to build a temple, and yet he was not allowed to proceed; but, he had this testimony, ‘Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.’—1 Kings, viii. 18.

“Just so it may be with you, my dear friend, in your desire for the ministry. Hitherto God seems to have hedged up your way, and may continue to do so; but you may be thankful that it has been in your heart.’ Still, however, what you say about dulness, and diffidence, and deficiencies of memory, learning, &c., I do not consider as sufficient impediments. Diligence, and the grace of God, would enable you to overcome them. I am glad that you have discovered your mistake in reference to the effect of the work of the ministry on our own religious character; for so, it is not calculated to fit the soul for heaven, and, of itself, it has many dangers; responsibilities are increased; in keeping the vineyard for others, there is danger of neglecting our own.—Sol. Songs, i. 6. There is danger of going about sacred studies, and sacred occupations as mere business transactions;

but the danger *seen*, is the danger *escaped*, and then, it is of all callings the most favorable to the work of grace in our own hearts. Certainly, all situations and callings are not equally favorable to the life of God in the soul; and, if one be more so than another, it is the Gospel ministry. The twelve disciples made some grand mistakes, and unquestionably fell into grievous sins, arising from their peculiar station; and for *one*, it had 'been better not to have been born,' than to have been a disciple; and yet, I cannot but think, that they were more favorably situated than others for growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, no doubt, now they hold higher seats in glory. By degrees, they perceived their danger, and learned to be more watchful and more dependent on God's grace; and by this, and this alone, any calling can be either safe or profitable. I wonder too, if you do not raise a higher standard of learning in your own mind, than is absolutely necessary. I grant that ten talents of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, are very desirable, and may be well employed—that is, if we have with them ten talents of grace to sanctify them—but one talent may also be employed, and we ought to remember that not one in ten, does possess ten talents. Now if you have time, only to make very humble attainments in literature, God does not require more. He only asks that what you have be well employed; do not wrap those you have in a napkin, because you have not more. The truth is, that the most successful preachers, are not *always*, nor *often* the best scholars. We are not all called to be professors, and critics, and translators, and defenders of Christianity through the medium of the press; but we are called to a faithful, scriptural, common-sense

exhibition of Gospel truths, and to this I am sure you would be adequate by the course of study you ought to pursue.

“ May the good Lord direct and bless you.

“ Your true friend,

“ WILLIAM JACKSON.”

Extract.

“ Remember that you are in good hands, in the hands of Him whose eye is ever upon you for good, who knows what is best for, and best to do with you ; and I am sure, that when you are brought to the end of your journey, you will see that you have been led the best possible way. At present, your duty seems to be to honor God by waiting and praying ; pray for His direction, and wait his time and manner of answering. I know this is hard to flesh and blood. Moses knew at an early period, that God, by him would accomplish the deliverance of Israel. Acts vii. 25 ; and probably when he smote the Egyptian ; *he* thought the time was come ; but God thought otherwise. He saw that to tend the flocks forty years, was as necessary to qualify him to be the Shepherd and Leader of Israel, as forty years in Pharaoh's court. No doubt during that long probation and discipline, he was sometimes tempted to think, either that he was *mistaken*, or that God had forgotten to hear his prayers ; in both which he was wrong, and in both which, you are wrong in my opinion, if you entertain such thoughts.”

“ *New-York*, Feb. 17th, 1834.

“ Full as my hands are at this time, I should feel really guilty, did I allow my brother to visit——, without a

line to you, my very dear friend, to show you that you still live in our affectionate remembrance.

“How is your poor, afflicted brother? his illness must throw a great weight of business on your shoulders. I hope an increase of worldly cares, does not enter into your *heart*, so as to choke the word. It is a great comfort to us that divine grace is sufficient for us in every lawful situation in life; for Moses, as the leader of Israel, for Joshua, as commander of armies, for David on his throne, for Daniel, as prime minister in the court of Babylon, and for you, as the chief manager of the business in your branch of the house. But the more we have to do, the more grace we need, and the more prayer and watchfulness.

“David seems to have penned some of his sweetest Psalms in the midst of his greatest cares and difficulties. I trust your multiplied engagements only tend to drive you closer to God, and wean your affections *from*, rather than wed them *to* the earth. I long to know what is, and has been your state of mind of late; in your last, you seemed to be quite depressed—perhaps the clouds have gathered and dispersed many times since then. Let us remember that *clouds* are as necessary as the *sun*, and bring as rich blessings. Is not my friend too much affected by sensible enjoyments? You know we are called to walk by *faith*, and not by *sight* or *sense*. Our aim, and desire, and prayer should be to say and do as the Psalmist, when he said, ‘In *thy word* do I trust.’ All beside we may leave with God; joy and sorrow, light and darkness, He will send just in such measure and duration, as infinite wisdom and infinite goodness see to be best for our spiritual interests. Our *bright* days are not always our *best* days for growing in grace. ‘A good man lying on his bed of sickness, on being

asked which were the most comfortable days he ever knew, cried out, 'Oh, give me my *mourning* days, give me my mourning days again, for they were the joyfullest days I ever had.' This anecdote brings to my mind the work from which I extract it, and which I recommend you to *purchase* without delay, *read* without a day's intermission, and *digest* as your soul's sustenance : I refer to 'Bridges, on the 119th Psalm.' It is one of the most spiritual, searching, devotional, instructive works, I have ever seen. How thankful we ought to be for such helps ! other men work the mines and we share the treasure.

"Mrs. J. unites in very kind regards, with

"Your sincerely affectionate friend,

"WM. JACKSON."

"To _____,

"On recurring to your former letter, I discover one query, to which in my last I did not reply. You ask how a person, situated as you are, ought to act with regard to attending church, during week-day, festivals, &c. I answer that if, like David, the language of our souls is 'when shall I come to appear before God ?' If like him, we would rather be door-keepers in His house, than dwell in the tents of ungodliness ; then we shall embrace every possible opportunity of being in the place where prayer is wont to be made. But we must also be careful that our good be not evil spoken of. When business requires our attention, and especially when others are interested, perhaps it is better not to insist upon the privilege, dear as it may be ; but when God requires our presence in his house, then neither the smiles nor frowns of men may deter us. At such seasons as you name,

you may, I should think, occasionally visit God's house without any detriment to the worldly interests of yourself or others. My counsel however would be, rather yield than offend—the Christian must '*follow peace*;' he must purchase it at any price, except the price of offending God. This remark will apply to another subject; one, in which, if you should ever again be tried, (which I pray you never may,) I trust you will have grace to act as becomes a Christian. You express your fears of yourself; let your fears be turned into *prayers*, and rest assured that God's grace is sufficient for you. Christians must learn to *suffer*, as well as to *do*. See 2 Pet. ii. 19—22."

"To —, on the death of his brother.

"New-York March 13, 1834.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"Most truly do I sympathize with you in the various trials you are called to bear; nor should I have allowed a single mail to pass without bearing a word of condolence from me, but that at the time yours of the 9th inst., was handed to me, I was suffering from an attack of indisposition which completely incapacitated me for writing. To-day I am better, and my first hour is devoted to you. Would that it were in my power to say something either for your comfort or edification; greater comfort you cannot have, than the hope that your dear brother has passed from earth to heaven, from the bosom of his family to the bosom of his God, where he finds a "happy issue out of all his troubles." O! let it teach us, my dear friend, to examine well our hopes for eternity—let it lead us to quicken our pace in our heavenward pilgrimage—let it direct our thoughts more than

ever to *eternity*. There lies the great secret of decision in our Christian character, high attainments in holiness, and great devotedness to God, and His service and glory, to realize more fully the great concerns and realities of *eternity*. Eternity gives to time, heaven to earth, and hell to sin, their proper value, importance and character. Such daily converse with eternity, and all of joy or misery connected with it, would draw our affections very much from earth, teach us how to use our precious time, and make death not only easy but desirable. It was in turning away his eyes from the things that are seen and temporal, to those unseen and eternal, that the Apostle rose so superior to his trials, and rejoiced so fully in hope of the glory of God—See 2 Corinthians, part of the 4th and 5th chapters,—and it is the only way in which we can take an elevated stand in godliness and be brought really to enjoy religion. This is the manner in which the death of beloved relations has a sanctifying effect upon the mind ; and I pray God that the present bereavement may thus be sanctified to every member of your family. It is indeed a severe stroke and we feel very much for you all. How does your afflicted —— bear it ? Tell her that there is but one way to escape from trouble, and that is by listening to the Saviour's call, 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.' Nor is it to be found there, unless we seek at the same time to be saved by Him from the heavier burden of sin ; we cannot really have the less without the greater. If we will consent to take Christ for our Saviour, then shall our light afflictions be made lighter ; yea, *profitable*, working out for us an inconceivable weight of glory ; so true is it that 'godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.'

• • • •

"Mrs. J. unites in affectionate regards and sympathy for yourself, and every member of your family who is with you, with

"Your faithful and affectionate friend,
"WM. JACKSON."

Extract.

"You complain of the want of spiritual enjoyments, and ask, as thousands have done before—nay what Christian has not at one period or other—'Where is the blessedness I knew?' It may be that our sensible enjoyments are low, even while others perceive that we are growing in grace.

"I have no desire to flatter—you would not wish it—yet I must say that I have no doubt 'you know the grace' of God. Let it be your watchful care, as in this, so in all things, to walk as becomes a professed follower of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, no question, you will experience richer enjoyments. 'Unto the *upright* there ariseth light in darkness,' 'To him that ordereth *his conversation aright*, will I show the salvation of God.' Only believe, and watch *unto* prayer, watch *in* prayer, and watch *after* prayer, and all will be well. We are not so much to desire *enjoyment* as *holiness*; get the latter and the former will follow. When we are clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness, i. e. the Redeemer's righteousness by faith, and personal righteousness by sanctification, then shall we greatly rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful in our God—then will the spirit of heaviness be exchanged for the garments of praise. Is. lxi. 3, 10.

"It would indeed gladden your heart, I am sure, to see your dear —, a sharer in the grace of God. O! it is sad to think of any, especially those so near and dear to us, living 'without hope and without God in the world.' You

say that she says she 'desires to be a Christian, but to change her heart is the work of the Spirit.' True—and Bartimeus could not open his own blind eyes; but he could and did mourn over his calamity, and when Jesus passed by, he could and did, under the impulse of a strong desire to see, cry out, 'Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' This he did without a promise to encourage him—nay under discouragements—He had done it, and the blind man knew that He *could* do it, therefore he put in his petition and he received his sight. Now, He not only *can*, but has promised to give a new heart; 'nevertheless,' says He, 'I will be inquired of by my people to do it for them.' If — desires a new heart as Bartimeus did his sight, let us imitate his importunity, and it *shall* be given."

To ———.

"I thank you for authorizing me to name you as a subscriber to our Seminary Library, and I rejoice to see that you are disposed to make your liberality abound. Depend upon it that God will not allow himself to be in your debt. Indeed I have found that giving brings with it its own reward; there is a pleasure in aiding those objects which have reference to the best, the highest interests of man, that profligates never can find in their extravagance. I am much pleased likewise with the suggestion you make to afford assistance to some young man in his preparation for the ministry. The expense would be from \$75 to \$100 per annum. The plan of the Education Society is to furnish only the board of its beneficiaries. When you have made up your mind, I shall be most happy to assist you in making a suitable selection, for I am persuaded there is no better way of serving the cause of Christ. God has enabled me to train one for the

work of the ministry, and I assure you, it is no little satisfaction to me to hear that he is laboring acceptably in the Church; and, if he should, as I trust he will, be instrumental in carrying many souls to glory, how will the reward be increased. How much satisfaction must Henry Thornton have had in educating such a man as Buchanan! If we consult either the experience of Christians, or the records of God's word, I think we shall find that the consolations of Christians, and their growth in grace, usually keeps pace with their labors of love. I may add that they are likewise generally the most blessed in their worldly affairs, for 'godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that *now is*, and that which is to come.' If they are not the richest, they are the most comfortable. 'A little that the righteous hath, is better than great riches of the ungodly.'"

" Alexandria.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" So prompt and pleasing a compliance with my wishes demanded from me an early reply; indeed the interest you have excited in my heart would have insured it had other engagements allowed.

" We were much pleased to learn that you had a safe, though it must have been a very unpleasant journey. We frequently thought of you when we saw the storm pelting without. Were I disposed to moralize, it would be very easy to find, in this little incident, a happy illustration of life, and especially of the Christian's life. Whatever difficulties or dangers you encountered by the way, all is well now as relates to the journey to — ; and whatever trials or temptations may beset our path here, they are all light and easy to overcome, if we have heaven in our eye; and

when we reach that 'home of the soul' all will be well, eternally well ; but the further amplification of this idea I leave with you.

" You propose a very difficult question in your last, but while I feel you do me great honor in making me your counsellor, I must refer you to a higher source, *the word of God* ; that is the standard by which all our actions must be tried, and should be, of course, the great governing principle of all our conduct. It forbids us to consult our own ease, interest, or personal comfort when either of these conflicts with higher obligations. ' If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out,' &c. Nothing must be allowed to stand between us and God. ' He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.' Those who would follow the Lord wholly, must be prepared to venture every thing in His cause.

" With regard then to attending the — church, or places of public amusement, I should say that either is an infected atmosphere, and rendered doubly dangerous, from the fact that our moral constitutions are predisposed to the infection.

" This remark, so far as the former is concerned, may be called *uncharitable*, but we ought not to be intimidated by such imputations. There is much cant abroad about charity, but there is no such charity enjoined in the sacred Scriptures, as requires us to think that many is right, and that one creed is as good as another. If I understand true charity, it is a spirit of Christian love or good-will toward all men ; which spirit may be, *must* be, cherished alike to men of every class and principle. One may therefore have charity in full exercise toward an individual or society, at the very moment he is obliged to condemn their faith, as sapping the foundation of our holy religion.

“As regards amusements and worldly compliances, the above remark may be considered morose and austere.—Christians should be particularly careful to vindicate their religion from this charge; not by argument, but by the cheerful voice and behavior, the light of joy in the countenance. A morose, gloomy Christian, is a strange anomaly; we must show that ‘religion never was designed to make our pleasures less,’ but that its tendency is to elevate and refine them. To resist these allurements may, for a time, cost a struggle, but a firm stand, decision of character, and a little perseverance, will, by the grace of God, make it easy. It would be perfectly easy now, for instance, for me to resist a temptation to visit the theatre, though the time may have been when it would have required an effort—other instances might be adduced. To avail myself still further of the privilege you have given me of advising, I would say little by way of controverting certain points of difference between you and ——. I would suggest the propriety of not discussing any of the points touching the Trinity at present; when the proper time is come, do it with prayer and as a serious business. But it becomes you, as one who feels deeply interested in his spiritual welfare, to bring before his mind such subjects as the spirituality and extent of the divine law—the tremendously awful consequences of sin—the necessity of repentance and of regeneration—the character of a child of God, and the blessed and glorious privileges belonging to the Christian. Let your exhibition of these topics be *scriptural*, and as much as possible from those portions of Holy Writ which ——— acknowledge to be divinely inspired. We must reason with those who differ from us, as Christ and his apostles did, out of their *own* Scriptures.

What ought a Christian to do in case of personal assault?

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Before I commence my morning walks among the sick, I am determined at least to commence a sheet for you. I ought not to have neglected you so long, nor should I, but for frequent calls from home this summer to attend Conventions, Annual Meetings, and to form Bibles Societies, etc. During such excursions, parochial duties so accumulate that my time is completely occupied with them when at home. Your communications afford me matter enough for several sheets; my only difficulty is to know where to begin. I am glad to find your conscience is tender; a sanctified conscience is a great blessing; it is the regulator of our moral machinery, and should therefore be carefully guarded. It is not however *alone* sufficient—it is not the light by which we discover good and evil, right and wrong. The *word of God* is that light. And taking up this figure, I would call conscience the eye of the soul, which enables us to walk by that light. We must then in all cases ask, not what man says, but what is *written*? * * * *

"The main difficulty of your next query, lies rather in the *practical* than the theoretical part. It is easy to tell what we ought to do in case of an attack upon our person, but I am aware it must be very difficult to *act* aright; and yet, we may say here, as in every other case, 'I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.' I have apprehended that you would find difficulty from that quarter, because Christians usually find their greatest trials arise from the chief sin of their unconverted state; and it is wisely so ordered, the more effectually to humble us, and to prove our sincerity. Think not therefore that any strange thing has befallen you, and fear not but God will make a way for your escape. It is undoubtedly your duty to *suffer* rather

than to *sin*. The maxim of the Gospel is, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell'—and this maxim is, according to my view, the genuine interpretation of the first law of nature, to which you allude. If self-preservation be that law, then surely we act most agreeably to it when we labor to preserve the *soul*, and to flee from the wrath to come. Should the matter proceed farther, which, may God prevent! it will evidently be your duty, as a Christian, to seek peace, even should it be at the price of much sacrifice. I think for the sake of peace, we must be ready to sacrifice any thing but the truth, and rather than do *wrong*, we must suffer any thing that God in His providence may lay upon us. If we do not act thus it may well be asked of us, 'What do ye more than others?' Such a course may expose us to the sneers, and frowns, and ridicule of the world, but we shall enjoy the approbation of the good, and especially the favor of God. 'If ye, for conscience sake, endure grief, suffering wrongfully, happy are ye.'

"The very limited space of a single sheet, does not allow me to write so fully on the above topics as I could wish. If what I have said on any point be not satisfactory, my pen will be at your service again.

"Farewell, my dear friend. Our united regards to yourself and sister. Believe me always,

"Faithfully yours,

"WM. JACKSON."

Extract from a Letter to his Brother, on the death of his Mother.

"Havre de Grace, June 10th, 1822.

"This is to me a very severe stroke. My hopes indeed

of ever seeing my dear mother again in the flesh, were not very sanguine; though sometimes I could not but flatter myself that it might possibly one day be my happiness, and that the pleasure would be more than doubled, by introducing my dear mother to an acquaintance with one, who would have been second to none in her esteem except her own kind parent—but all these sweet hopes are blasted. Providence in His wisdom, has seen fit to deprive me of them; but is it not a consolation, that one hope remains which can never be frustrated? I mean that blessed hope of eternal life, which, says one, ‘is an anchor to the soul in all the storms of adversity; and the oil of gladness, swimming above all the waves of affliction.’ There are some ‘vulgar errors,’ as it appears to me, connected with the subject of death, which, I often think, if once removed, might tend much to ameliorate grief for departed friends. Many imagine they are removed to an immense distance from us, but why? I know no intermediate space between earth and heaven, but a little space of time. No intercepting matter except a few pounds of dust. When I reflect on heaven, I like to bring it very near me—into my very chamber. Where an omnipresent God is, there is heaven, and if glorified spirits have, as they must have, locality, let us bring them as near to ourselves as possible. Why not this, as well as any other spot in unbounded space? Persons are too apt to speak of these separations as *for ever*—but how so? If those who have gone died in faith, they are now inheriting the promises; and if we live in faith, they are to us infallibly certain. The third thing which gives poignancy to death, is that we have no sensible intercourse with the departed—but, though not *sensible*, it is none the less *real*. ‘Are they not all ministering spirits?’ And is

it not our happiness, my brother, to number amongst them, many of our own nearest and dearest kindred ? If I am deceived in these ideas, it is a comfortable delusion, of which I trust I may never be deprived."

* * * * *

To a Niece on Confirmation.

"Louisville, August 28th, 1837.

"MY DEAR C——,

* * * * *

"Once, you had our affection for your father's sake, now, we love you for your own ; and it is our heart's desire and prayer, that natural affection may be strengthened and sanctified by Christian love. It is for you, dear girl, to say whether it shall be so or not ; and we have our hopes, that you have already answered it in the affirmative. We have heard with pleasure, that your thoughts have been directed to the important subject of Confirmation. Indeed we gather, that by this time, you have in your own person, ratified that, which your sponsor did for you ; and if you have, it is no unreasonable thought to suppose that the spirit of her who bare you, and of him who stood for you in baptism, witnessed and heard your solemn vow. If they did not, a great cloud of angels did, and God, the searcher of hearts, did. Is it done ? May the gracious Lord indeed make you His, in the bonds of an everlasting covenant ! Let Him hear those solemn vows daily repeated, and may He give you grace to fulfil the same,

'Till in life's latest hour you bow,
And bless in death, a bond so dear.'

"A bond so dear indeed ! A bond that unites you to

your kindred in Christ. A bond which unites you to 'an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'

"And would you not, dear C., gladly separate from the world, and sin, and vanity, for such a union? I would rather call God my father, and holy people my kindred, than claim affinity with kings. May God thus gather in, first one and then another of your dear family, until all are saved with an everlasting salvation. Tell them that this is their uncle's desire and prayer, and thus let them be assured of my best love.

"Presuming, dear C., that you have taken this solemn step, we cannot but follow you in our thoughts and prayers, with intense anxiety. This is our anxiety, that you may lead the rest of your life according to this beginning. I say we are *anxious*, because you have only just began the Christian race, and many have done the same, who have never gained the prize. There is the ground of our fear: but millions as young, and partakers of the same nature, have been crowned; there is the ground of our *hope*. No. I recall that last sentence. *The grace of God is all-sufficient*—that is the ground of our hope; and if you, dear C., will allow self-diffidence, and unwavering confidence in God, to attend you through life, you are safe; as safe, as if the crown of glory were on your head. You cannot have too many fears, too much distrust of yourself, or too much confidence in God; the one will make you *watchful*, the other *prayerful*, and this is the best ground on which you could stand.

"You will not take it amiss, if I tell you what we have now a right to expect from you. You know we have a right to expect much. We do not look for perfection. O,

no ! we know too well the corruption of our own hearts. But we do expect that religion will affect you in every feature of your character, in every relation you sustain in life ; or else that change which we ascribe to grace, is unworthy to be called a *new birth*—a *new creation*. Your covenant engagements require you to be a better *daughter*, a better *sister*, and a better *member of the Church*. Baptism made you a *member* of the Church ; in Confirmation, you profess to be a *living* member. Now all this will require you to live by rule. He who lives without rule, is like a mariner who sails without a compass, chart or polar star. Let the word of God be your chart, conscience your compass, and the glory of God your polar star to steer your course by ; then you will neither make shipwreck of faith nor a good conscience. Yours will be a prosperous voyage, and so an ‘abundant entrance shall be ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ ;’ the meaning is, you shall enter heaven like a richly laden vessel under full sail.

“Your aunt has just brought to light some extracts, which I made from Bishop Beveridge’s pious thoughts, when I began, as I trust by God’s grace, to lead a new life, which is now twenty-eight years ago. They will aid me in saying some things that I wish to say, and if you like the specimens, then let me recommend to you the whole work ; I think you will find it in your father’s library. Concerning his general conversation, the pious Bishop says ; ‘I am resolved by the grace of God, to make Christ the *pattern* of my life here, that so Christ may be the *portion* of my soul hereafter.’ Concerning his *thoughts*. ‘I am resolved, &c, to watch as much over the inward motions of my heart, as the outward actions of my life.’ ‘I am re-

solved, &c., to be always exercising my thoughts upon good objects, that the Devil may not exercise them upon bad.' Concerning his *affections*. 'I am resolved, &c., to love God as the best of gods, and to hate sin as the worst of evils.' 'I am resolved, &c., to desire spiritual mercies more than temporal; and temporal mercies only in reference to spiritual.' 'I am resolved, &c., to hope for nothing so much as the *promises*, and to fear nothing so much as the *threatenings* of God.' 'I am resolved, &c., so to be angry as not to sin, and therefore to be angry at nothing but sin.' Concerning his actions. 'I am resolved &c., never to set my hand, my head, or my heart about any thing but what I verily believe to be good in itself, and will be so esteemed by God.' Concerning his words. 'I am resolved, &c., never to speak much, lest I speak too much, and not to speak at all rather than to no purpose.'

"I might select more, but these will be enough to show you what you ought to be, and what it is your happiness to be. And oh! my dear girl, be particularly mindful of the manner in which he introduces each resolution—'I am resolved *by the grace of God*;' that is the great secret of Christian holiness: and if ever we forget it, like Peter we shall be reminded of our folly by our sin. And while you look for *sanctification* by the grace of the Spirit, ever look for *justification* by the righteousness of Christ, and thus being justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, all our heart's desire will be accomplished concerning you.

"And now my dear C., I must bring this to a close, to allow for a little family news, which your aunt has agreed to tell you. I have not said *all* that I wished, nor *as* I wished. Interruptions have broken up my ideas, and the thermometer is at ninety. Give my love to L., and say that

some day I shall remember her in this way ; in the meantime, she must read this, as though it were to herself.

“Your ever affectionate uncle,

“WM. JACKSON.”

To another young friend on the same subject.

“I need not say, my dear L., how my heart rejoices to hear you have confirmed the act, by which you were admitted into the ark of Christ’s Chnrch. This is my prayer for you, that the Lord may shut you in ; and that through His grace, you, ‘being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally you may pass to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with Him, world without end.’ You will ere this, have seen a long letter I wrote to dear C. on this subject, which was designed for yourself, no less than for her. I have almost forgotten what I then said ; all that I remember is, that I aimed to give such hints, as might be useful to young Christians. Let me now remind you, that you have not yet attained, you have but just begun to make gracious attainments ; the victory is not won ; you have but just buckled on your heavenly armour ; you have not reached the stature of a man in Christ ; you are but just born into his family. A young Christian is like a little child ; a newly enlisted soldier ; a fresh scholar ; and just as much lies before him, of growth, conflict, study, as before the child, the soldier, the scholar, before he ‘apprehends that for which he is apprehended of God, in Christ Jesus.’ If you ask me what is the greatest danger to which young Christians are exposed, I should answer, *pride*. They are different from what they once were, they differ from many around them, and they excite the interest, and have the esteem of pious ministers and friends. The great adversary

takes advantage of this, and too often leads them into his own condemnation, and makes every grace a snare. The best remedy against pride, is to be looking much into our own hearts, making frequent visits to Calvary and Gethsemane, and reflecting on what we should have been without the grace of God. Thus holy David kept himself humble. 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.'

'Lord, forever at thy side,
Let my place and portion be ;
Strip me of this robe of pride,
Clothe me with humility.'

"If you ask what are the best means to grow in grace, I answer, to grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The scriptures testify of him; the scriptures are the 'face of Jesus Christ.' 'Christ,' says one, 'is so exactly represented in the Gospel, that, when we come into his personal and real presence, we shall be able truly to say, 'this is indeed the person who was, long since, in his Gospel so clearly exhibited to my faith.' Search the Scriptures then, dear L., that you may find Christ in them. He is in them every where, as the sun is every where in the heavens, but He shines more brightly in some places than in others.

"To reading add *prayer*. Having found Christ, let Him not go till He has given you a blessing. And finally, *exercise* yourself unto *godliness*. An *idle* Christian cannot be a *growing* Christian. Godliness is godlikeness : to be like God in all His inimitable perfections ; and there is no time, place, nor circumstance, in which we have not opportunity for this exercise. Christ was as holy as a child, as the head of his disciples ; in His trade, as in His ministry ; in

Nazareth, as in Gethsemane. The exercise of godliness has reference to our tempers, spirit, behavior, and conduct towards others in doing them good. But I must not enlarge. May the author of all godliness, perfect in you that which I trust He has begun.

Extract.

To a niece on the death of her sister.

“ My dear C. will hardly believe me when I say, it has scarcely been possible for us to acknowledge the receipt of hers, communicating the sad intelligence which we had so long been anticipating. It came to hand just as I was starting for convention, and your aunt, whose intention it was to write during my absence, was called to the discharge of other duties. Our dear little Maria was taken extremely ill, so much so, that fears were entertained for her recovery; but God has been better to us than our fears; she is now running about, quite cheerful, but very feeble; still we do not flatter ourselves that many years are before her. She is a frail flower, and a sweet one too. Too sweet to blossom long in the desert. We should not be surprised at any time, to see her transplanted to a more genial clime, where so many of our kindred are, and where our dear S. now is. We thank you and Wm. H., for the minute account you have given us of her last days.

“ You do not know how happy it made us, to learn that she ‘gave a sure pledge at the end of her days, of rising in brighter array.’ She had gained a strong hold upon our affections. She was lovely without grace, (if indeed she could be said to be destitute of it, even when we saw her.) How much more lovely must she have been, when it shone

forth brightly in her. And now 'in vain the fancy strives to paint' what she is. It was my desire to preach a sermon on the occasion of her death, but uncontrollable circumstances prevented. My text would have been, Sol. Songs, vi. 2. 'My beloved has gone into his garden, to gather *lilies*.' Would it not have been sweetly suitable? Was there not much about her, resembling that lovely flower, in sweetness, in purity, in growth? And does it not present death with a lovely aspect? It is only being gathered by the hand of Christ, and that not to wither and fade, but to flourish in paradise, in immortal youth, and bloom forever in unfading beauty,—the beauty of holiness. So may we die. Dear C., let such examples of holy living and holy dying, strengthen our faith, and confirm our devotedness to God. It will not be long, till we are called to pass through the same valley; whether it will be dark and gloomy, or light and pleasant to us, depends entirely upon our Christian character. We trust that you have all profited by her example in life and in death.'

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SERMON,
PREACHED ON OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL OF THE
REV. WILLIAM JACKSON,
BY THE
RIGHT REV. B. B. SMITH,
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF KENTUCKY.



FUNERAL SERMON.

“ For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.”—ACTS xi. 24.

Character, won by a life of self-denial and usefulness, is a more precious inheritance to be left behind for those we love, than the most princely estate earned during a career ruinous to character and reputation.

But what is character ? No term is more complex. The foregoing epithet commonly makes it plain enough, as when we speak of a good character or a bad. But without an epithet it is even more expressive, than when we describe it as an exalted or almost perfect character.

We do not so much mean by it goodness, as the results of goodness ; nor usefulness, so much as the springs and sources of usefulness ; nor influence, so much as that which is the true secret of influence. It is not impressed by nature, though its original elements are often so imparted. It is not the sure and invariable product of even the wisest and best education, though education generally has much to do

with it. It is not formed by principle, for itself is principle—nor by habit, for itself moulds and fashions all good and noble habits; and yet principle and habit have very much to do in its formation. It is a compound product, the result of many and very complex causes. But in the highest sense of the term, character is strictly a Christian article. It is formed and found in no region of the earth which the Son of Righteousness has not enlightened, and the influences of the Holy Ghost have not visited. “Good man” cannot be written, except in connexion with “faith.” Character can exist in no heart, not “full of the Holy Ghost.” Barnabas, amongst his people and in his age, was a remarkable character. But he was not a solitary specimen. He was a sample of a class. As many in that age and country or in any other, of whom it may be truly written they were “full of the Holy Ghost and of faith,” may have it as truly written of them, that “they were good men.” Of no others, however distinguished in other respects, can the same with truth be written. Character is a divine impress from under the broad seal of heaven. Whenever or in whomsoever formed, it is formed by the Holy Ghost as the agent and faith as the instrument. And where the impression is clear, where all its lines are deeply cut and boldly marked, it must be in his case, who is “full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.” The more of a good thing, the more of its blessed results.

I dare say that these commendatory remarks upon good old Barnabas were written or at least published, after he was dead and gone. Otherwise, perhaps they might somewhat have impaired, even in him, the very character which they applaud. Applaud! The word is ill chosen! I should have said the character which they record. For the object of the writer evidently is, with the utmost simplicity and godly sincerity, just to bear testimony to what he knew to

be true. That testimony has been a glorious record, ever since, of the power of the Gospel in the formation of such characters ; and a most glowing persuasive to all, who feel within them noble aspirations after goodness, and would fain yield themselves to be moulded in the mould of the Gospel after the image of the heavenly, to seek for it, by earnestly praying "to be filled with the Holy Ghost and with faith."

We stand, my dear friends, by the side of a coffin, upon which if any inscription were to be written, it would, I am sure, be written with great simplicity and brevity, but with common consent, in large and luminous characters, "He was a good man." And we are all ready, with one accord, to ascribe the wonderful secret of his being so, to the same cause now, which wrought so powerfully in early times—because he was "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." And this I hope, as in the case of the sacred historian, will exempt me from the censure of using extravagant panegyric, and, misled by the partialities of an early and long tried friendship, of depicting an unreal character, and of ascribing to the creature the honor due only to the Creator, who is God over all, blessed for evermore. With the sad memorials before us that he was but dust and ashes—with his own testimony that he was the chief of sinners—with this voice from God that his estimate of his lost, fallen and condemned condition was but too correct, in that he has thus awfully exacted of him the penalty of being a sinner ; who are we that we should praise man for what is in man ; or rob God of the honor which is His due, if in any one solitary instance a child of wrath is made a child of grace :—if, as in the case of your beloved Pastor—the base and sinful character which had belonged to him, as a child of nature, is transformed by the Holy Ghost through faith into a model which this whole community has admired, and the

impress of which, made upon our memories and our hearts, we shall carry with us and bless God for, to the latest hour of our lives. I presume that what I am about to say will be received by the generality of hearers as partial and extravagant praise. I cannot possibly help it. If it be so, it is simply because, by the grace of God, facts and the truth constitute the highest eulogy. But if so, then the praise will redound, not to the man whose sinful nature was all along opposed to the developement by grace of these facts ; but to Him, who, out of a miserable lump of sinful clay, was pleased to form our dear brother, into a choice vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's service.

I. The sketch I am about to attempt must of necessity be hurried and consist only of a few bold strokes ; but the aim will be thereby to place before you a resemblance to the life, to the praise of God's grace, of the personal and official character of your late beloved pastor.

1. There was about him a singular simplicity, equally removed from pomp and pretence, and from over familiarity. It was his passport to the hearts of children, for he was himself light-hearted and guileless as a child. And it was his ever open letter of recommendation to the guileless and the good.

2. There was about him a certain noble frankness and openness of character, which disarmed suspicion, and exempted him from the necessity, common to most men, of bringing some proof of what he said. There was no need of it in him. You had but to look upon his face, and massive truthfulness stood impressed on every feature. In less skilful hands his frankness would now and then have left the impression of bluntness—never of sternness. But the ever thoughtful kindness of his heart melted down his native plainness of speech to a captivating honesty and sincerity.

3. There was ever with him the finest play of all human sympathies :—Indignation against wrong done, or imposition intended, or unmerited reproach inflicted, as if it had been an injury done to himself, only it was an indignation guarded with much discretion and sweetened with all tenderness ;—a smile to reflect the smile of all light-heartedness, but of no profane frivolity ;—a tear to answer to every other tear shed by a wrung heart or an overflowing sympathy.

4. There was in him the greatest nobleness of disposition. It cost him no effort to soar above all littleness of thought, of suspicion or of inuendo. He *was* above it always. To forgive injuries—to speak well of those who evil entreated him—to do the kind office where, in return, kind office had been refused, was that part of the spirit of Christ in him, by inspiring him with which, the Holy Spirit had expelled and well nigh utterly eradicated the spirit of selfishness.

5. There was in him a sweet spirit of piety. It breathed in his blameless yet cheerful conversation. It poured itself forth in a life of prayer. It animated, as a divinity within, all his thoughts, words and actions. It moulded his whole character. It was the spring and fountain-head of his charities, which ever flowed, in a steady stream, and overflowed towards his friends, the poor, and his own beloved Church. Often what his own purse could not do, his eloquence could. And for the bible, the tract, the colonization, the temperance, the Sunday school, and the missionary cause, he was followed by large and liberal contributions, which were always most munificent, when, without respect to the ability of the giver, they bore the nearest resemblance in amount to that of the almost penniless plead-

er.* But remarks like these will fall more properly under the head of traits of his official character. His personal character exerted, of course, a powerful influence in the formation of his ministerial character.

II. This was very discoverable in the social circle, which his fine flow of spirits, his child-like simplicity, and his overflowing, warm and natural sympathies always greatly enlivened. At whose fire-side was he not welcome? Whose domestic circle has not his presence made glad? And whose social affections have not been kindled into an heartier and healthier glow, by being warmed by the genial affections of his heart?

1. This was still more discernible in the sick room. His native gravity and sense of propriety sat well upon him there. And so did his exquisite and shrinking delicacy of feeling. But there his human sympathies exalted, purified, refined by religion and the lofty themes which revelation supplies, found their fullest, freest play. He was at once compassionate and faithful, frank and yet considerate, sympathising and yet not recreant to any unpalatable duty. His visits were always welcome, but in the sick room they were waited, longed for and gratefully remembered, almost as if they had been the visit of some good spirit from within the veil, which separates a selfish and gross world from a spiritual and a benevolent. His large experience his,

* He had learned early in his ministry by means of the precept and example of a dear clerical Brother, afterwards one of the Foreign Missionaries of the Church the divine art of consecrating one tenth of his income to the service of the dear Lord who had bestowed all, and infinitely more upon him. And often has he been heard to give thanks to God for this heavenly teaching, and warmly to recommend the same practice, as by no means too high a standard of Christian benevolence. None could inspect the charity account which our dear Brother kept for years without emotions of wonder, love and gratitude?

stores of memory, his happy narrative and illustration, his copious treasures of scriptural truth, his tenderness of heart, his fervency of devotion, combined to make him the most lovely, estimable and useful of pastors, in the sick room.

2. And what a minister he was in the Sunday School. Rich in that love of simple Bible-story which God has had purposely written for the benefit of little children—happy in those illustrations and unadorned expressions which rivet best the attention of the young—but above all, fresh in those pure thoughts and warm affections which made him a child amongst children, alike loving and beloved—he had a smile, a kind word, an apposite remark for every child in the Sunday school. And the seed which the Great Husbandman sowed here by his hands, look you, if it be well watched and watered, what fruits it will yet bring forth to the honor and glory of God !

3. All elements of character in him gave him signal influence over young men. They could not look upon him or hear him speak, without feeling the force of a practical illustration that religion is not the gloomy thing, too often depicted in the imaginations of the frivolously gay. Interested in him, they felt a double interest in his preaching, which varied as it was in character and rich in scriptural instruction, possessed the additional charm of simplicity, refined taste and undoubted earnestness and sincerity. How greatly God blessed his labors to this class, let the records of all the churches he ever served bear witness—let our own Sunday school in its corps of efficient teachers, and the roll of our aspirants for holy orders abundantly testify. Here it is, after sympathizing with his bereaved family, that my heart bleeds most under a sense of our irreparable loss. That long night of his last mortal agony, oh ! how was my heart overpowered with emotion, when, hour after hour, I saw

his bed literally surrounded by the young men whom he was wont to call his sons, weeping as if their hearts would break, at the thought of a final separation, as to this world, from their spiritual father, their faithful counsellor, and their best earthly friend. May his mantle fall upon each of them ! May it be their study, their delight and their prayer to think, to speak, to be and to do whatever they are conscious would be most pleasing to their departed pastor, were he permitted to watch over them, where he has gone, as he certainly would have done, had he been spared to us ! And out of their number may more than one arise like-minded with this "good man," to supply his lack of service to the church, and to preserve entire the succession of faithful pastors, until our Lord shall come !

I had designed to say a word upon his character amongst his clerical brethren, which was singularly frank, affectionate and kind : of his hospitality, which was as liberal as his heart was large and generous ; and of the dignity, the eloquence, the thrilling interest of his speeches from the platforms of the great benevolent institutions of our land : but I am admonished to pass over these and a multitude of other most alluring themes of discussion, and to confine myself to a brief comment upon his preaching. (1) It was most interesting, keeping alive the attention of his audience without effort and without weariness. (2) It was various, more diversified in topics than that of any minister I remember often to have heard. (3) It was solemn and in earnest, as though he himself believed and felt every word of what he said, and was intensely anxious that those whom it most concerned should believe and feel it also. (4) It was persuasive touching every chord which vibrated true to right feeling and the immortal interests of men. (5) It was instructive, far beyond the

common average, and specially adapted and designed to build up Christians in their most holy faith. (6) It was sound and scriptural, abounding in the truth precisely in the connexion and in the proportions, in which it appears in Holy Writ. No dogmatist, or controversialist, or stout polemic was he. Christ Jesus and Him crucified was his great theme, and he preached Him first—Him last—Him midst and without end, as mainly anxious, both to save himself and those that heard him.

Such a one has gone to his rest. He is not, for God has taken him. Indeed "he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

Is God unrighteous in cutting short the period of such a one's usefulness? God unrighteous, in taking away a precious gift which we never deserved, and never sufficiently prized! God unrighteous to take his own weary, faithful and almost worn-out servant, to rest with himself in Christ Jesus for ever! God unrighteous to reserve a gift, so long lent, and for which, so precious has it been, eternal thanks were due for ever so short a loan!

Nay, friends and brethren, soon as our utterance choked by emotion can be recovered, let us give thanks to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for the noble character, the bright example, the holy life and the useful labors of this dear departed brother, whose poor, worthless remains we are about to consign to the tomb. Let us give thanks to him for sin pardoned, grace conferred, Satan vanquished, the grave conquered and an heavenly crown gained, for this our dear brother, through a crucified, ascended and glorified Redeemer.

One thought more solemn than most others attends his departure. He has gone before you, my dear hearers, into the presence of our great God and our Saviour. Is it as

your accuser, to bear witness against you in that day, that God by his ministry had long been calling upon you, but that you refused—that he had stretched out his hand and no man regarded it? Or has he gone before, to bear record to your willing obedience to the Gospel, in the presence of all his beloved people, prepared joyfully to exclaim, “behold me, and the children whom thou hast given me?”

Let us more than ever admire and prize the Gospel. With more passionate ardor let us cleave to the Cross, preaching, suffering, living, dying. So that, at the last, pastors and people, parents and children, teachers and pupils, masters and servants, bond and free, high and low together may all experience the transforming power of that Gospel which our dear dead brother loved and preached; experience its sublime consolations when we come to die, and reap that reward, upon the fruition of which he has already entered, when time with us shall be no more.

Now unto Him who is the first and the last, who liveth and was dead, and who, by conquering death and bringing life and immortality to light, has robbed the grave of its terrors and death of his sting, be all honor and glory, as, with the Father and the Holy Ghost is most justly due, now and for ever. Amen.

MINUTES OF CONVERSATION

WITH MR. ———.

January 23. Having heard that Mr. ———, of ———, was at ——— Boarding-house, in a wretched state of health, having come to this city for medical advice, and desired to see me, I visited him to-day. He opened the conversation with a brief statement of his past life and views; that his habits had been strictly moral, always under some sense of religion, but that his mind had ever been fluctuating as to the truth of revelation. He had read much on both sides. After investigating the evidences in its favor, he had frequently been left without a doubt; but in a few months, he found himself as much under the influence of scepticism as ever. He then asked my reasons for believing in the authenticity of the Old Testament.

Answer—Historic.

Inquired how I vindicated God from the charge of *cruelty*, as regards his dealings with the Egyptians, and *favoritism*, as regards the Israelites.

Answer—The former, on the ground of His holy, wise, and just government—the latter, on the ground of sovereign mercy, in rescuing one part of an apostate empire, that he might ultimately save the whole. Illustrated by His pre-

sent dispensations. Some nations are still more favored than others, &c. Modern nations have been destroyed; it matters not, as regards the divine character, whether it be by miracles, or in the ordinary course of events. I urged the dilemma that the Scriptures were written either by *bad* men, or by good men *uninspired*, or by good men *inspired*, &c.

This he seemed to feel.

Urged prayer to God for assistance, on the ground that, if there be a God, He can and will help—that we have certain necessities, and if they are not met in the word of God, they are not met at all—we need comfort—we are sinners—we desire immortality. He asked me to pray for him. I proposed to pray *with* him, and concluded my visit with prayer.

January 24. Conversation at first turned briefly on former subjects—then, on *affliction*—the *special providence* of God apart from miraculous interposition—whether it was any thing apart from the laws of nature. I gave instances in which it could not be traced up to any law of nature; as, the sudden death of blasphemers—the awful end of persecutors of the Church—the preservation of the Church in opposition to the power and malice of her enemies.

On eternal punishment. His objection was to *infinite* punishment for *finite* offence. I stated it to be, punishment *parallel* with transgression—*eternal sinning* and *eternal punishment*.

Traced an analogy between God and man in this particular. Parents punish so long as the offence continues—governments do the same. They draw out punishment through existence, when the case requires it; and, if the existence continued a thousand years, so would the punishment, should the individual manifest a determination to offend still. So does God. This seemed to satisfy him.

On the *happiness of the Christian's delusion*, if it be a delusion. He remarked upon it strongly and sweetly.

On *sins of omission*, which he felt ; especially his omission to look at this subject, while in health, more than he had done.

Concluded with prayer by his invitation.

January 25. Found Mr — in too much pain to converse.

January 28. Conversed, on the world in which there is no suffering, because there is no sin. He responded that it was delightful to those who had the prospect of entering there.

On the province of reason in matters of religion. I remarked, that, as reason is above sense, so faith is above reason ; and as there are facts which reason can receive, but sense cannot, so there are divine truths which faith can receive, but reason cannot comprehend.

On the evidence of the authenticity of the Scriptures, from their internal purity, (S. Jenyns,) and from prophecy. To this he assented. Concluded with prayer.

February 1. Mr. — to unwell to talk much. He requested information on the atonement. I read him an extract from Bishop Heber, and explained. He inquired why, if Christ was a lamb to take away the sin of the world, were not all saved ? I explained and illustrated. He was much struck with the illustration of the brazen serpent.

February 4. Read to Mr. — the account of Count Struensis' conversion, which seemed to interest him much. Conversation turned on difficulties still remaining in his mind, as, if the Holy Scriptures were so important, why did they not come to us, with all the force of mathematical demonstration ? I entered somewhat into the nature of evidence—directed his mind to truths connected with, and

preparatory to, further consideration of the doctrine of the atonement—such as, man's guilt and condemnation.

February 6. Read from Gurney on the Atonement to Mr. ——. Endeavored to show him, that the Gospel alone teaches how God can be just, and the justifier of the ungodly; that, without the Gospel, we must be shut up in despair. I asked him, after prayer, if he prayed for himself. He said he did, and added that he felt an increasing pleasure in contemplating these subjects, and was happy to say he found himself escaping from the "meshes of scepticism."

February 7. Found Mr. — too unwell to hear or say much. I presented, as further evidence of the truth of revelation, a rapid sketch of the prophecies which had received their accomplishment in Christ, which much struck his mind. I then pressed the authority of Scripture, as evidence for the truths to be believed.

February 11. Read to Mr. — the epistle and exhortation contained in the Visitation of the Sick. He expressed his pleasure in, and gratitude for, my visits, &c. &c.

February 12. Very interesting visit. Found Mr. — more at ease. Read Tract on *Regeneration*, (of A. T. S. vol. iv. 41.) After hearing the evidences, he said—"If these are the marks of regeneration, then I trust my heart is changed." "I would not change situations with many of my old friends, who are in health and prosperity." This strongly contrasted with his language, when I first visited him; then, he spoke as if he could not see how God could be good and merciful, and afflict him so severely. Said he had rather be a "Christian in a cottage, than an ungodly man in a palace." I adverted to the fact that regeneration was a *great* change. That, he said, made him *fear*. I then remarked that grace might be *real*, though *small*; and show-

ed him how God advanced the work, and especially through the instrumentality of affliction, quoting Mal. iii. 3. "Does it say so?" he asked, "I have been thinking that He connected with His atonement a process of purification—an alembic." Said, "I have often determined to suffer *heroically*, now, I desire to suffer *patiently*. I have frequently desired death that I might be freed from pain, now I begin to look forward to it for a better end." We prayed together; at parting he gave my hand, as usual, a most affectionate grasp.

February 14. Found Mr. — in comparative ease. He began our conversation by expressing his resignation to God's will, and the comfortable hope he entertained that his "peace was made with God." I directed him to Christ as "our peace." His hope, he said, was in him. He alluded, with great satisfaction, to the articles I had read on the atonement and regeneration. I directed his thoughts to the fruits of the spirit—"Love, joy, peace, long-suffering," &c., as the only evidences of regeneration. He begged me to repeat, and spoke of his own state with regard to them.

I admonished him that the enemy might yet, and probably would, greatly assail him, and directed him to the proper weapon for repelling his attacks—*faith in God's word*. This led to a talk on faith, in which grace, he felt himself, he said, "the fullest and most deficient." Conversation, at one period, turned upon those things which were hard to be understood. I remarked that they were arguments in favor of religion, rather than against it. In nature, we find many things beyond our comprehension; in a religion from God, we might expect the same. Were there nothing beyond the power of the mind of man to grasp, there would

be nothing that he might not create. Mr. — said, when a child he asked his father many questions to which he received answers which he could not then comprehend, but he believed because his father said it, and he has since been able to comprehend them. It would have been a sin, and an insult to his father, not to have believed him when he could not comprehend him, and it would be a sin and insult to God, to disbelieve Him because it was beyond the reach of his comprehension.

There is an evident increase of confidence in the word of God. He manifested great anxiety for his relatives, and begged that I would, in case of his death, give them as minute an account as possible of our conversation. He hoped, from the confidence they had in him, that it might be blessed to them. They knew his truth and integrity, he said, and added, "I speak it without vanity, for I have none now," and it may lead them to be careful for their salvation. "They are all moral," he continued, "but that will not do—morality and religion are two things. They may be moral without religion, but they cannot be religious without morality." I remarked, that some were moral from fear; some from regard to reputation; but religious people were moral from their love to the character of God and His law, and we could easily appreciate the difference. "Yes"—he replied—"there is my servant, if he obeyed me, and served me from fear, I should have no respect for him; but I know that he is kind to me in my helpless state, from love and respect, and I love him as a brother."

He then requested to be instructed in the sacraments of the Church—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He had not been baptized, and had doubts as to the propriety of any mode but *immersion*, which we discussed. He expressed

his unwillingness to depart in any iota, from the divine directions—a pleasing tenderness of conscience. Concluded as usual with prayer.

February 16. Time chiefly occupied to day in discussing the *mode* of baptism.

February 17. Found Mr. — too unwell to pursue the above subject, and proposed to pray with him, to which he assented, saying that he found it more comforting and refreshing than discussing topics. He found his views, feelings, and wishes, were better expressed in prayer, than in conversation. After prayer he remarked, that formerly, during the best prayers, his thoughts would constantly wander, but now he found his mind firmly fixed. He adverted feelingly to a confession I had made, respecting our weakness and insufficiency—said how exactly it corresponded to his own experience. I illustrated the folly of leaning to our own strength by the case of Peter, which was new to him and struck him forcibly. The conversation, though short, turned profitably and pleasantly on our state as guilty, weak, blind creatures, and the provision made for us, as such, in Christ.

February 19. Summed up the argument on the mode of baptism. Mr. — confessed that the arguments in favor of immersion were not so strong as he had thought; still, were he in health, he thought he should prefer that mode as being admitted on all sides to be right; but that, in his case, he had no alternative between affusion, or no baptism. Said it did not appear to him that God would so institute an ordinance, that it could not be enjoyed by *all*. We next proceeded to the doctrine of the Trinity. Before entering upon it, we prayed for divine guidance and illumination. After reading to him, on the subject, Mr. — remarked, that it was beyond doubt a scriptural doctrine; that, according

to his view of the *atonement*, Christ must be *divine*. He manifested a mind submissive to the testimony of the word, and said that he apprehended these subjects, in a manner very different from what he once did : once his mind was always arguing *against* them, now, he found himself arguing *for* them. Pleasant interchange of thoughts passed respecting the world, where everlasting spring abides," and on that hope which is an "anchor to the soul."

February 22. Have not seen Mr. — for some days, owing to indisposition and engagements. Visited him this morning—found him suffering greatly with pain in his eyes—he could not converse but could hear. I read first Timothy, first chapter, and spoke on verses 15 and 16; then proposed to read the Tract, "Conversion of Rochester," as an illustration of the apostle's declaration, "This is a faithful saying," &c., and one that might prove edifying. Mention being made of the instruction the Earl found in Isaiah liii., Mr. — requested me to read it. "Well," said he, "I did not know that there was so much about Christ in the Old Testament. In truth, I have held that portion of the Scriptures in perfect contempt: my reading has been confined to the New Testament; the other I have considered a pack of nonsense and fables; but now, I see that no man can examine the one without the other. They make a whole of perfect beauty and symmetry. Oh! if my life should be spared, what pleasure shall I take in reading them, and comparing the one with the other. The manner in which you brought together the prophecies relating to Christ, and the accomplishment they received in him, forced conviction upon my mind which I could not resist. It ought to be shown to every one. I believe the Scriptures. I cannot, I dare not doubt them; but my faith is small." He used the word *believe*, for the conviction of the under-

standing ; *faith* for the credence of the heart. "Now," he added, "I have a more realizing sense of the presence of God ? I can pray to Him as one that hears me ; formerly, I prayed as to a nonentity. I was like one speaking on the sea-shore—heard by no one—not hearing myself."

At the conclusion of my visit, he alluded to fresh sorrow, which had come upon him, and which he would detail at another time. "The last link," said he is broken ; I knew that friends must be taken from me or I from them, but"

* * * * *

I proposed to pray. When I rose, he said, "you have expressed my feelings."

March 6. Having been absent from home, have not seen Mr. —, since the last date. Before leaving, sent him "Wilberforce's Practical View." Spoke of it with gratitude—said, he had never read any thing which probed his heart and conscience more—thought it enabled him to know himself better—remarked Wilberforce wrote like a scholar, a gentleman, a philanthropist and a Christian.

March 9. Called on Mr. —, but had not much conversation. He alluded again to Wilberforce, and remarked that he needed nothing for instruction but that work, my conversation, and the Bible. Said he would not exchange his present situation, with his present views and feelings, for past health and prosperity, without them.

A manifest change exhibits itself in his temper and disposition, in regard to his sufferings. "I was," said he, "hardened by them ; now, I trust I feel quiet and submissive." Read him the baptismal service for adults, which led to some interesting conversation. Prayed and took my leave.

* March 11. Long conversation on the subject of theatres,

growing out of Wilberforce—stated his passion for them—confessed that the amusement would not be so popular if it were more moral—said his views concerning them were changed. Reverted to the affliction, to which he alluded in a former visit, and entered more at large into his personal history. At one time, every thing prospered with him. “I often wondered,” said he, “whether such prosperity could continue without an alloy, and now the answer has come, in many forms.” * * * * *

I directed him to cast all his care upon God, “who careth for us.” He asked me to repeat the hymn, which I had before began, “I would not live away.” Prayer as usual.

March 14. Conversation turned on the peculiarities of our Church—its constitution, ministry, worship, and observances.

March 15. Mr. — expressed a wish for the day of his baptism to be fixed. Said that he had his fears, but the desire was in his heart; he wished it earnestly. Gave a connected statement of his views and feelings. Said he could not profess such excitement as some did, nor such love, nor such joy; but he believed the testimony concerning Christ, he rested upon Him, he gave his heart to Him, he wished to live to him, to honor Him as he had opportunity. Said his feelings were so changed, in regard to prayer, that he hoped his heart was changed. “I not only pray steadily,” added he, “but as often as my heart is drawn to it, I find delight and refreshment in it.” I read him the greater part of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which drew forth some inquiries, especially on ii. 8. “By grace are ye saved,” &c. Prayed with him, and exhorted him in reference to his approaching baptism; reminded him that God

required *true* grace, not any specific measure, nor had He any *uniform* mode of working on the heart. Illustrated this, by the cases of Lydia and the jailor.

March 16. Final visit preparatory to Mr. —'s baptism. I read him Rom. viii. chap., and my sermon on ver. 1st. as suitable on the occasion. Conversation then turned on a more sacramental union with Christ. Mr. — expressed his fear of self-deception and his ground of hope. Said he was willing to renounce all sin and vanities—that he desired to live to God ; that his only hope was in Christ. "His coming into the world," he said, "showed that he had some great end in view ; and no end was worthy of Him, but to be the Saviour—the only Saviour of sinners ; my confidence is in Him alone." I spoke of the privileges of spiritual union with Christ, which he said met his "feelings and necessities." We then went through the questions in the baptismal service, and other particulars preparatory to the administration of the sacraments.

A pleasing interview—manifestly clearer views of the plan of salvation, and cordial acquiescence in it. Less talk about his sufferings, at least in a way of complaining.

March 17. Baptized Mr. —. Present, Mrs. J., Rev. Mr. C., Mr. S. and a few others. Solemn and delightful service. Mr. — did not talk much, but said he trusted he was prepared. The dark room and glimmering light, seemed to represent the darkness of nature, and the light shining in a dark place ; while the almost sightless sufferer brought forcibly to mind, the spiritual blindness from which he had just emerged.

March 23. Visited Mr. — several times during the past week. Found his mind very tranquil. Said it seemed to him that he never could be overcome of unbelief again.

I reminded him of Peter's case, and charged him to "beware of Peter's word," nor confidently say, "I never will forsake thee, Lord," but "grant I never may." He replied, "yes, I remember it—I remember your allusion to our weakness in one of your prayers, and have feared it since." I directed his mind to the Lord's Supper, respecting which, as to its *obligations* and benefits, he was lamentably ignorant. My visits this week have been occupied mainly on these points. Signs of growth in grace are evident. Received from him many warm expressions of gratitude and love.

Sunday, March 24. Administered the Lord's Supper to Mr ——. Present, a few particular friends, as at his baptism. He said little, but appeared to be deeply affected.

March 25. Asked Mr. — how he enjoyed the services, in which we were engaged yesterday. "Oh!" said he, "it was deeply affecting; I was very much moved; it seemed to bring Christ crucified near to me—nearer than I could have imagined. Perhaps my situation affected me. It is the last time I can ever expect to enjoy the privilege." I then endeavored to show him how he might and must hold communion with God, without the aid of sacraments—by prayer, by meditation, by the word. Thus God speaks to us and thus we speak to Him. Thus he gives and we receive.

March 26. A short but most interesting interview. I read Mr. — my sermon for next Good Friday; Luke xviii. 31—33. "Nothing," said he "could have suited me better; I want such enlightening, such instruction. It is the great subject with me now. How much is His death to be esteemed even beyond that of martyrs! He died *voluntarily*." I said, "it is a precious truth; if he be ours

by faith." He replied, "I have no other trust ; all my hope is there. I do not know how it may appear to those in health, but to me it appears that there is nothing else worth possessing." I asked him if his faith in Christ produced any change in his feelings, with regard to his sufferings ; to which he replied, "I find this difference—once I scorned to complain, I was too proud to murmur, I was determined to suffer like a soldier. Now I desire to be quiet and submissive, to suffer like a *Christian*. God, he continued, has been more merciful to me than I would have been to myself. I have desired many times to take away my life, and would have done it, but for certain circumstances which restrained me ; and God has kept me hitherto, to bring me to this state of mind." I reminded him of parallel cases in Cowper and the jailer. Then we adverted to death, and I mentioned the promise, "when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," &c. ; to which he responded, "it is my desire to die like a Christian." I cannot remember all of his expressions, nor any of them in their full strength and propriety. We spent a few precious moments in prayer. The duties of the week (Passion-week) pressed upon me, and compelled me to leave, though it would have been a feast to stay.

March 27. Speaking of the Scriptures, Mr. ——— remarked, that though he had previously some knowledge of them, yet that now they had a value to him he never perceived before ; all seemed to have become new. He requested to hear the account of our Saviour's death—"for that," said he, "is the precious subject to me now."

March 29. Mr. ——— requested me not to forget him in my prayers. "I see their value," he said ; "once I did not. Pious ministers have visited me, but I never asked them to pray for me, for I thought there was no efficacy

in prayer. Once, when ill of a bilious fever, Mr. — visited and prayed for me in an adjoining room ; he prayed earnestly for my conversion: I thanked him for his prayer, but felt astonished that a man of his sense could think it would be of any avail ; but I trust it is answered ; and now I desire the prayers of Christian friends."

April 4. Mr. — took his departure for his home. He came, he said, in quest of *health*, and he trusted he had found *salvation*. Took a view of God's providence in bringing him to this place, that he might learn the way of salvation. Spoke with strong feelings of affection and gratitude to myself. We prayed together, in the hope that our next meeting would be before the throne of glory. I gave him "Wilberforce's Practical View," purchased a Prayer-Book for him, gave him a number of Tracts, and ordered for him the "Episcopal Recorder." With these, he said, and the Bible, he would have enough to read.

In one of my former visits, he asked our reasons for Infant Baptism, which I gave him.

Thus ends one of the most interesting cases, taken in all its circumstances, that God has in his providence ever brought under my immediate notice. May the last day show, that the salvation of a soul is the blessed result !

S E R M O N S .

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SERMON I.

" This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." —
1 TIM. i. 15.

" Christ Jesus came into the world "—what a visitor!
" To save sinners"—what an errand.

That a sovereign should visit every part of his palace is not surprising. That he should visit such parts of his empire as may promote his pleasure, gratify his curiosity, or advance his security, would not be astonishing.

But, that he should go into a revolted province, among rebels, alone and unarmed to *dwell*, might well amaze us..

Thus did Christ. He left his throne and came to a world, which indeed was once a paradise, not unworthy his Divine Majesty, when he might " come as into his garden and gather myrrh, and spice, and all precious fruits;" but now it is a waste, all grown over with thorns of sin, and

strange vines bringing forth sour grapes ; and every man in it is an unprofitable husbandman—a Cain, sent to wander through it, with the mark of infamy on his brow.

And *how* does he come ? Not in clouds and great glory, not with ten thousand of his saints ; but in our form and likeness—as a man, and that too, a man of sorrows. He never spake of His royalty, but it was to be mocked. He never assumed regal dignity but once, and then “in meekness and lowliness, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass ;” and his only regalia, a mock sceptre, a robe of scorn, and a crown of thorns.

None would ever have known him to be a King, had not angels honored his birth, and had not the Father proclaimed from His excellent glory, “This is my beloved Son.”

And *for what* does he come ? To save sinners. How worthy the errand even of divinity itself ! That he should have appeared to punish sinners would have been no marvel ; but that he should come to *save* them is a “mystery angels desire to look into.” Once he descended from His throne of glory to make a world—now he comes to redeem one. Once he came to drive sinners out of Paradise, and to curse them and the ground for their sake—now, to open the gates of a better paradise, and to bless them with the blessings of the “upper and the nether springs !” Once he came to destroy man from the face of the earth, because “the cry of his sins had come up before him.” Now he comes to take those sins on his shoulders, and bear them away into the land of forgetfulness. Once he came with a fiery law in his hand. Now he comes “full of grace and truth.” Henceforth “Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.”

He came to save *sinners*—not the unfortunate, but the

guilty—not the objects of pity merely, but the subjects of blame and condemnation. There is nothing in man to claim his intervention ; every thing to excite his wrath.

And at what a price ! under what humiliation, what shame, what sufferings, does he carry out his purposes of love ! When he came to create, it was but to speak and it was done. When he came to punish, it was but to frown and “ the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the clouds rained down snares, and fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest.” But, when he comes to redeem, if he speak he is “ smitten, and buffeted, and spit upon ;” and, for his tears and love, they cry out “ Crucify him, crucify him ; away with him.” “ It is not fit that he should live.” Lo ! there he hangs, charged with a world of sin—forsaken of his Father. He drinks out the bitter cup, whose wine is the red wine of indignation, to the very dregs.

For what end and design did he thus stoop and suffer ? That he might “ save sinners.” “ He came not into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” He came “ for us men and for our salvation.”

But, while the unconvinced, or the half convinced sinner, conceives salvation to be the easiest event imaginable, the truly convinced sinner can scarcely believe it to be within the bounds of possibility, so many are the difficulties which stare him in the face.

He has broken the law. How shall its violated purity and honor be repaired ? He has offended justice, how shall it be appeased ? Sin has dominion over him, how shall its power be broken ? Heaven is lost, how shall it be regained ?

An answer to these inquiries, such as we may conceive, yea, such as we know, to characterize the newly, thoroughly

convinced sinner, will unfold this "true and worthy saying", on which, and on which alone, hang the hopes of a ruined world.

The law stares you in the face, with all its broad demands and heavy frowns. It gives you the knowledge of sin and of the deserts of sin ; but it shows no way of escape from either the one or the other. What must be done ? Christ has "magnified the law, and made it honorable," by his infinitely valuable obedience unto death ; and has thus brought in an everlasting righteousness, as long and as broad as all the requirements of the law. We are therefore "no more under the law but under grace ;" that is, we are not under it as a covenant, as that to which we may look, either in whole or in part, for salvation. A perfect state, such as angels are in, and such as our first parents were in, appends life to obedience to the law ; but, that once broken, there is no more possibility of salvation by the law. We cannot atone for past violations, we cannot meet its full demands for the future, and it is not, cannot be, mitigated ; therefore it does nothing but condemn. Either then, there is no salvation at all for sinners, or it is salvation without the deeds of the law ; and such is the Gospel. "By grace ye are saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast." *

And yet, we cannot be saved without righteousness. Christ has brought in "everlasting righteousness ;" and now, through faith in him, we are dealt with as though we, in our own persons, fulfilled the whole law. His subjection to the law was voluntary, therefore his obedience is the only true supererogation ; *i. e.*, the only obedience above

* Eph. ii. 8, 9.

what the law demands, and which therefore may be imputed to another : and, being infinite in his divine nature, his obedience is adequate to the demands of the law upon all men ; only marking the restriction, “ to them that *believe*.” It is “ unto all and upon all them that believe.”

Sin-stricken soul, here then is thy answer to the demands of the law ; “ Christ Jesus came into the world to fulfil the law for me, and to save me a sinner.”

But, you say, “ not only has the law demands upon me, but *justice* too ; if the law looks to the future, justice looks to the past ; the law says, ‘ The soul that sinneth it shall die.’ I have sinned ; how can justice be met and I live ? ”

The sufferings and death of Christ were voluntary, and of infinite value, and so justice is satisfied ; just as debts are as effectually liquidated, when paid by the surety, as by the principal. The evangelical Prophet, speaking of that which was to be, as though it had been, says, “ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.” * His forerunner points to him, and cries, “ Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” † The Lamb, with his dying breath exclaims, “ It is finished : ” and to him give all apostles witness, that “ his blood cleanseth from all sin,” and that he “ came into the world to save sinners.”

Here then is our answer to the demands of justice, “ *Christ has died.* ” “ May every heart with rapture say, the Saviour died for *me*.”

But Heaven is lost, how shall it be won ?

This also is embraced in the scheme of redemption.

* Isa. liii. 4, 5.

† John i. 29.

Christ's death was a price, to purchase not only exemption from hell, but a place in heaven. Hence the dispensation of grace, which he came to introduce, is called the "Kingdom of heaven;" because it first brings down heaven, as it were, into the heart, and finally lifts the believing soul up to heaven. "I am a king," said he to his judge. "I go to prepare a place for you," said he to his sorrowing disciples. "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," said he to the dying thief. And he hath made all who believe, "kings," and "they shall reign with him for ever and ever."

But, you say, that sin and corruption have such hold upon you, that you are altogether unmeet to partake of the "inheritance of the saints in light;" and you ask, "how shall I ever be delivered from this body of sin and death."

An important inquiry this; for, though "by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified," yet, "without holiness shall no man see the Lord;" and the only evidence we can have of our justification lies in our sanctification.

The apostle felt a degree of the same alarm, from the same cause, when he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and he gives the answer, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."* To the very same source to which we look for *mercy*, we must look for *grace*. He who is our *righteousness*, is also our *sanctification*; and hence he promises that he will send the Holy Spirit into our hearts, first, to convince us of our sin, then to deliver us from the love of sin, and finally from the power of sin; and this he does by degrees. True, corruption may, all our lives long, *live* in us, but it does not *reign* in us, as it once did. Once it

* Rom. vii. 24, 25.

was entertained as a guest, rather as a member of the family ; now, it is pursued as an enemy.

We come now to the most difficult part of our task—to persuade our hearers to accept this salvation ; to convince them that it is really “worthy of *all* acceptance.”

It is easy to prove this saying ; easy to unfold it, at least so far as to exhibit something of its meaning and excellency ; easy to show, that man, being lost, can no more save himself, than a dead body can rise ; and it is easy therefore to prove that all men ought to receive it with all gladness of heart, and readiness of mind : but it is not so easy to induce men to do this. My hearers, we can lead you to the wells of salvation ; we can bring the streams to your very feet, but it is God alone, who by His Spirit, can cause you to draw and drink. “The excellency of the power is of God.” “He makes willing in the day of his power,” as he did on the day of Pentecost.

What an evidence of His love ! He creates the living water, opens the fountain, rolls away the stone, invites and draws the sinner ; and thus, by his power and grace from beginning to end, He is the “author and finisher of our salvation.” May He take to Himself His great power and come among us, and with great might succor us this day, that very many may be drawn by His quickening grace, and drink and live.

This saying, “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is worthy of all acceptance,” “worthy of all men to be received.” What can I say more ? The saying is *true*, and you have no prospect of salvation in any other way. Many sinners, like the woman in the Gospel, have spent their time and money in seeking other remedies, and have been “nothing bettered, but rather grown worse ;” and it must be so, until, like her, they have recourse to the

great Physician of souls. O! do but touch his garment and you shall live.

When an individual has a disease upon him, which is curable only by one power, the duty is plain—the argument is comprehensible—“Go to him or die.” And so it is written; “He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned.” You have such a disease upon you; it pervades the whole system. It is in the ear, the eye, the body, the heart—aye, the very soul. It is blindness, deafness, helplessness, corruption, a paralysis of the whole moral man; and if it be not speedily removed, death must ensue. Then make no delay; apply not to physicians of no value, but go at once to Christ, and to Christ only. “Rise, he calleth thee.” “Return unto me and I will heal thee.” Let it not be said as of old, “I would have healed them, but they are not healed;” lest it be said again, “forsake her and let us go; for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.” *

This salvation is “worthy of all acceptation” because it is a great, rich, free, full salvation. To express all in one word which comprehends all that is excellent, it is a *glorious* salvation. Speak we of a complete victory over a mighty foe? we call it glorious. Or of a beautiful prospect? it is glorious. Or of the sun travelling in the greatness of his strength? he is glorious. Or of heaven, the abode of blessedness? it is glorious. Or of Him by whom are all things in heaven above and on earth beneath? He is glorious. And speak we of salvation? it is glorious. All glory is brought into it. Sun, and moon, and stars have no glory in the comparison. The Infinite, if I may so speak, has

* Jer. li. 9.

centred His whole glory in this *great salvation*. Here is the glory of His *wisdom* in its contrivance. His wisdom as seen in creation is not half so wonderful as this. Here is the glory of His *power* in its completion and confirmation—the dead are raised, the blind see, the veil of the temple is rent without hands, the sun is darkened, graves opened, Satan subdued, death conquered. And here is the glory of His *grace*. All other acts of grace are but as a drop in the ocean compared with this. “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”*

It is a glorious salvation because it *brings victory* over sin, the devil, the law, the wrath of God, death and hell. Glorious, because it is a *full* salvation; it brings grace, light, wisdom, peace, heaven—all that the soul can desire or enjoy. Glorious, because it is an *eternal* salvation. “He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.”† The soul saved, is saved for ever. “Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation.” Is it not then “worthy of all acceptance?”

It is “worthy of all acceptance,” because of the *love* that is in it; and who ever refused to be loved? It is “love better than wine,”‡ however it may be refined, and purified, and strengthened by age. It is love from everlasting—love without dissimulation—love without money and without price—love which not only revives and cheers heavy hearts, but quickens dead sinners, and comforts distressed saints, and of which we may drink abundantly without injury, yea, with great advantage. “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” It is love stronger than death, for he gave himself to death for us; and better than life, for the longest life shall set in death; and sweeter than

* Eph. ii. 8.

† Heb. v. 9.

‡ Cant. i. 2.

a feast of fat things full of marrow. "My soul," says the Psalmist, "shall be satisfied with thy loving-kindness as with marrow and fatness."* And will not you, my hearers, be satisfied too?

O! there is no satisfaction without it; all other objects may inebriate and surfeit, but they cannot *satisfy*.

It is "worthy of all acceptance" because of the *mercy* that is in it; and who ever refused mercy? What condemned criminal ever rejected the mercy that would pardon him, and relieve him from the penalty of the law? Are we not guilty? Are we not condemned? Does there not await us a certain judgment and fiery indignation? But in this saying there is mercy to pardon all our sins. O! do not then forsake your mercy—that is to court swift destruction.

It is worthy to be received of *all* men—all classes of men—all conditions of men.

Are you great and notorious sinners? You ought, by all means to receive it, for "if the righteous scarcely," with much difficulty, "be saved, where shall the unrighteous and the sinner appear?" You certainly are included among those whom Christ came to save, and "How can you escape if you neglect so great salvation?"

Are you of a better class? Still you cannot say you have no sin, and so you cannot say that you do not need a Saviour. It is worthy of *your* acceptance.

Are you depending on universal salvation, or a limited damnation, or salvation by a mitigated law? *You* have no certainty that you are right, but *we* "know in whom we have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed to him against that day."†

* Ps. lxxiii. 3, 5.

† 2 Tim. i. 12.

If you are right, we are safe enough, but if we are right, if "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," * you are fearfully, fatally wrong; therefore it is worthy of *your* acceptance.

My young hearers, it is worthy of *your* acceptance, for it is the only boon that can make life easy, pleasant, peaceful, safe. Receive this saying, and God will be the guide of your youth, the strength of your manhood, the stay of your old age, and your portion for ever.

My aged hearers, it is worthy of *your* acceptance. It will be a halo of glory around your brow. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."† "The years are come, in which you have no pleasure," but this salvation gives a mellowness to old age, like the well ripened fruit of autumn, far richer and sweeter than the green buds of youth, ready to be gathered into our Heavenly Father's store-house. Having this salvation, you may with confidence believe, "that though the dust return to the earth as it was, the spirit shall return to God who gave it,"‡ and so be "ever with the Lord."

Ye who are poor in this world, it is worthy of *your* acceptance. Having this, you "have all and abound." "All things are yours; whether the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."§

Are you rich? It is worthy of *your* acceptance. Without it you are in a snare. Without it you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."||

* Acts iv. 12.

† Prov. xvi. 31.

‡ Eccl. xii. 7.

§ 1 Cor. i. 21—23.

|| James v. 3.

O, my beloved hearers! receive this saying without delay or hesitation, "the time is short." Receive it with gratitude, it is God's great gift. Receive it with entire submission to the will of God—it is the way He has ordained for our salvation. Reject every other mode and rely wholly and exclusively on Him who "came into the world to save sinners."

If your hearts are drawn and moved at all, you can raise only one difficulty. You may say, "I am not worthy." I know it. But this salvation is "worthy to be received." If it were never to be received but by those who are *worthy*, verily the end of Christ's coming would be fruitless. Was Paul worthy? No, says he—"I am the chief of sinners!" Yet he accounted both this saying, and Jesus, the substance of the saying, "worthy to be received by him," and by the vilest of sinners in all ages.

Jesus came to save *sinners*—not the worthy. Jesus "received gifts for the *rebellious*"—not for the worthy. Jesus "liveth to make intercession for *transgressors*"—not for the worthy. Then, let one, let all, upon this warrant receive this saying, i. e., "*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation.*"

SERMON II.

"The riches of his grace."—EPH. i. 7.

Two most captivating words are contained in our text. The one captivates the worldling, the other the Christian. *Riches* and *Grace*! No music-like riches in the ear of the worldling; no sound like grace in that of the Christian. But the one is all sound, the other all reality. The former is in truth, poor; the latter incalculably rich. The riches of God's grace are our riches, if we are in the faith. They form therefore a fit subject for our contemplation. The miser counts and recounts his treasures, and the Christian surely may attempt, at least, to reckon his, which are more precious far than gems or stores of gold. It will be but an attempt, for who can measure infinity, and comprehend eternity?

The Apostle, contemplating this transcendent subject, exclaims, as if on the brink of an ocean without bottom—"Oh, the depth! how unsearchable! how past finding out!" The more therefore we labor to know it, the more we shall find that "it passeth knowledge." It is a field, where the soul may range through everlasting ages, with infinite satisfaction, but without satiety. This makes it the soul's eternal delight, because every advance discovers new beauties and more light, with the certain prospect of still increasing beauties, and still increasing light.

There are many particulars in which Jehovah is rich. As in *wisdom*: "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And in *power*: "He has all power in heaven and in earth." And in *possessions*: "All things, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers" in heaven or on earth, are His. And in *glory*: but how can a worm of the earth speak of His Glory, before whom angels, with trembling awe, cast their crowns, saying—"Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honor, and power?"* Every attribute is but a ray of His glory; all combined do but illustrate the riches, the exceeding "riches of His grace." Divine *power*, and *wisdom*, and *possessions*, and *glory*, are golden reeds and scales to measure and to weigh His grace. What is the exceeding greatness of His power, as expressed in the works of creation, and especially in "raising Christ from the dead," and setting him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers? that is the measure of His grace.

What is the depth of the riches of His wisdom, called by the Apostle, His "manifold wisdom?" Such is the depth of His grace. What the extent of His dominions? Such is the length and breadth of His grace.

What is the brightness of His glory? No tongue can tell, no figure can express. Whatever it may be, He calls His grace His glory—yea, "The riches of His glory."† Well may His grace be termed "unsearchable riches,"‡ and "exceeding abundant grace."§

Let us now see wherein the "riches of His grace" have been exhibited. The goodness of God to angels and man at the first creation was grace; but to demonstrate His im-

* Rev. iv. 10, 11. † Eph. iii. 16. ‡ Eph. iii. 8. § 1 Tim. i. 14.

mense love and goodness, we must consider what He has done for sinners. Creating goodness bears no more comparison to saving grace, than the light of the first day of creation did to the brightness of the fourth.

While I, who am "less than the least of all saints" preach among you the unsearchable "riches of Christ," may you be filled with all the "fulness of God."

I. We see the "riches of His grace," in having "predestinated men to the adoption of children," ver. 5, 6. We are by nature the children of the Devil, and of course, children of wrath. What did He? Did He swear, as He justly might, that we "should not enter into His rest," and that He would raise up another and a better race from the dust and the stones? No. Though He had spoken against the soul that sinneth, that "it should die," yet, He "earnestly remembered us still." His bowels moved towards us, and determined to receive us again into His family, and that, to a higher place; to be children and heirs, not with the morning stars who never fell, but with His Son Jesus Christ, and all "according to the good pleasure of His own will."

In us, there was nothing to move His love, and every thing to move His wrath; but mercy triumphed over wrath.

This He did when there was no arm to save, no, nor an eye to pity. Where did this divine purpose begin? On Calvary? No. In Bethlehem? Was it an after-thought, when Satan had marred the beauty of His moral creation? No. It was, says our Apostle,—“and he spake as he was moved by the Holy-Ghost”—“before the world began.” Well may the Apostle break out—and oh! who would not join him?—in praising and glorifying this grace.

II. The purpose was good, even if it could go no further ;

and how shall it be accomplished? The world was made by a *word*; but words will not make children of men, sons and daughters of God. Words will not redeem souls. What then must be done? Again He opened the riches of His grace, and paid the infinite price—"We have redemption through his (Christ's) blood, according to the riches of his grace." The cattle on a thousand hills were a vain sacrifice. Then said the Son, "Lo! I come;" and he made himself the son of man, that he might "give us power to become the sons of God;" and "he made himself an offering for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Every step from the cradle to the cross, was bedewed with tears or stained with blood. "He was a hungered,"—"He wept,"—"his hair was filled with dew,"—he "groaned,"—"he died." Oh, the riches of his grace!

III. We see the riches of his grace in the inheritance He hath obtained for us, (ver. 2.) for He would not make us children, without making suitable provision for us; but the world is not suitable: all below is too false, too fleeting for the sons of God. Being made, through the riches of grace, partakers of a divine nature, the same grace prepares for them a divine inheritance. Being made sons together with Christ, we are made heirs together with him, of the glory which he had with the Father before the world began. Call it what you will; a Canaan flowing with milk and honey, a Paradise in which are the tree and river of life, a kingdom where peace and prosperity reign, a New-Jerusalem whose walls are precious stones, whose gates are pearls, and whose pavement the finest gold; "All are too mean to speak its worth, too mean to set its glories forth." It is salvation, life everlasting, praise, "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

And we have the foretaste, the earnest in the present life. We have the "holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance," ver. 13 : we have "peace and joy shed abroad in the heart," a foretaste of the "peace that flows as a river, and of joys forever more : "We are now raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,"* a pledge of future resurrection, exaltation, and glory.

But, rich as are the Christian's present joys, such as the world cannot give, they bear not that proportion to the full, purchased possession, which the first fruits does to the abundant harvest, the first dripping of rain to the copious shower, or the Tabernacle to the Temple. Between two finites there is some proportion, however vast the disparity ; but between finite, as the most we enjoy here below is, and infinite, as the future will be, there is no proportion. "The ages to come" will reveal to us "the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."†

IV. There are other considerations which may raise our thoughts in some faint proportion to the "riches of his grace," which are peculiarly suitable to us ; and which, while they enlarge our comprehension of love incomprehensible, will give no unsuitable application to our subject.

The riches of God's grace, are to be seen in the extent of the invitations, coming continually from the voice of free grace. His language is, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden ;" "Whosoever will let him come," &c. But there are millions of millions ready to perish ; then let millions of millions come : here is enough for all. His voice goes forth, like the morning star before the sun, that brightest image of his grace, "Let all men come to

* Eph. ii. 6.

† Eph. iii. 7.

the brightness of his rising ;” and like the sun, which has cheered the eyes of a thousand generations, He has not lost one beam of His grace, nor will He to the end of time. Count the rays of the sun, if you would count the riches of His grace ; or measure the ocean of light He pours forth, if you would measure the inexhaustible fulness of boundless, bottomless, shoreless love. O, the depth !

Now contemplate the sins that His grace can blot out. All, *all* sin. His mercy, which is a part of His grace, is infinite to pardon all sins ; His power is infinite to subdue all corruptions, and to overcome all difficulties. Are your sins “ red like crimson ? they shall be as wool.” Do they rise to the clouds, and are they as the sand of the seashore, for multitude ? It exhausted not His power to make the sand, and it will not exhaust the riches of His grace to bestow upon you full forgiveness. There is no limitation in the divine mind. Men make limits by their impenitent, unbelieving hearts ; but God makes none. “ Repent,” He says, “ so that iniquity shall not be your ruin.”

Then look at the gifts—the greatness, the richness of the gifts He bestows. The prophet calls them, “ balm for the broken-hearted,” “ liberty for the captive,” “ beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,” and the garments of praise, for the spirit of heaviness.” In the plain language of the Gospel, He gives pardon, peace and eternal life. Oh, what a mine of grace must that be, which can deal with the sinner, as if he had never sinned ; which can calm the troubled mind, and abolish eternal death in the victory of eternal life ! Well may his riches be denominated, “ unsearchable riches.” This language gives us the idea of a mine, whose limits cannot be explored, nor its immense wealth exhausted : one end of this mine, as we have seen, is the eternity that is past, the other, is the eternity to come ;

its bottom as low as Hell ; its top, high as Heaven. The grace of God began in eternity, and will only end with eternity ; it lifts the soul from perdition, to a place at His own right hand. O, "the riches of his grace!" When Solomon had cast up his inventory of the world, he exclaimed, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Now, as we are able, we have cast up the riches of God's grace, and we are constrained to exclaim, glory, glory, they are the riches of his glory. Angels, in view of these treasures which they can never know as we shall, say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and blessing, and glory. And let every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth" join in the chorus, saying, "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."*

See how this river of grace rises like the holy water which Ezekiel in vision saw ; first, it flowed in gracious purposes ; then, in exceeding great and precious promises ; then in tears ; then, unlocked by the spear, it gushed from the side of Christ in streams of blood, and filled the fountain that is opened for sin and uncleanness.

Let your choice of God be "deliberate, free, unreserved ; let it be steadfast and abiding ; take Him for your sovereign as well as your Saviour. Oh ! take a whole Christ for your portion. Oh ! let him have a whole heart for his possession."

Then, from this time forward may you say, "my beloved is mine, and I am His : " His wisdom is mine to guide me in all my concerns ; His power is mine to defend

* Rev. v. 12, 13.

and support me in all dangers and difficulties ; His mercy is mine to pardon all my sins ; His whole grace is mine to help in every time of need ; and his glory is mine ; “ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.” 2 Tim. iv. 8.

My brethren, what influence should our subject have upon us ? It should draw us from every other object to take Christ for our portion. How much is that man worth who has any thing less than God for his portion ? Nothing. He may have mountains of gold, and yet be poor. What will gold purchase ? “ meat, drink and clothes.” And what more ? “ meat, drink and clothes.” But it will not purchase peace, health, content, nor pay one mite of the ten thousand talents we owe to God, and so leave the soul a miserable bankrupt before Him at the last.

And how much are the men of grace worth ? Though having nothing that the world calls wealth, yet they are rich, for all is theirs : all persons, all things, all events. “ All things are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” *

Are they poor ? the man that struts by them, swelled with the pride of wealth, is poor, and much to be pitied ; but these are rich. A fire, a wreck, an earthquake, may strip that man as naked as he came into the world, and then what has he left ? if they do not, death will.

But, he who has God for his portion, need not fear though the world and all things that are therein should be burned up. “ The Lord liveth,” and that is “ the good part which can never be taken away.” “ Who shall lay any

thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? "It is Christ that died." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?" Death is his last and greatest enemy, and death shall bring him to the house of his God. Death is the porter that opens the gates of eternity ; and when the heaven-born soul has entered there "it shall proceed through ages and ages, and dive deeper into these riches and still find them unsearchable."

Come then, poor sinner, to God and be blessed with durable riches. "But, are they for me ?" Yes, for thee. God is not rich in grace for Himself ; it is for sinners, for rebels, for enemies. The strongest proof He has given us of the riches of his grace, proves that He has opened his treasures for such as these. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that you, through his poverty, might be made rich." In the depth of his poverty see how grace abounds for the chief of sinners. How low he comes ! see him in the "likeness of sinful flesh ;" lower yet, see him under condemnation ; lower yet, see him made a curse for us. Will he not then willingly make us rich ? It was for this end He became poor. He gave his life for us, how will he not then give us all that his blood bought ? There is no escaping from these conclusions : they are drawn from infallible premises, by the infallibility of divine wisdom.

Come then sinners, however poor, however wretched, come to God ; give yourselves to Him with all your poverty, but with all your heart, and He will give Himself to you with all His riches ; and they are riches that make glad the heart, and add no sorrow therewith : riches on which your hearts may be fixed with the utmost intensity : riches that you may covet with a miser's thirst ; "He is rich to all that call upon him." Let Augustine's prayer be yours, "Lord,

give me thyself ;” and let the Psalmist’s resolution be yours, “Thou art my portion, O Lord, I have said that I will keep thy words ;” this makes a complete Christian character. Take the Lord for your portion, and you secure “exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think.” Take His word for your rule, and you have an indisputable evidence to your interest in Him, for “Christ being made perfect became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him”*

* Heb. v. 9.

SERMON III.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."—PROVERBS iii. 5, 6.

"Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," says the Prophet Jeremiah. Though this declaration refers to a particular case, it applies equally to all men. That man has been but a poor observer of his ways, who has not learned, that his own understanding is inadequate to the task of guiding him with discretion, through the mazes and labyrinths of life. He knows not what is good for him; he cannot tell what will be the events of the next moment; and if he were competent to this, he has not the power to bring any thing to pass. Hence, a very cursory glance will suffice to show, that the men, who "lean to their own understanding," are doomed to lives of projects, and frustrations, and vexations; the evils which they weave in their vain imaginations, are in an instant unravelled by another hand; and so they are wrapt in their winding sheet, before they have effected any device.

Lean not then, O man! to thine own understanding. It is a miserable counsellor: it will keep thee in constant perplexity and uncertainty; it will not direct thee to any good purpose; it will leave thee to be tossed on the ocean of

life, like a frail bark in a tempest, without cable or anchor, and at last, cause thee to make shipwreck of thy interests, in this life and the life to come. Neither "trust in man, for his breath is in his nostrils, and wherein is he to be accounted of." No, not in princes, for in them is no help; nor yet in angels, for their wisdom would be folly in guiding the affairs of men; but "trust in the Lord with all thy heart." "Happy is the man that hath the Lord for his counsellor, and the God of Jacob, for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God;" for, "He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." We may trust in Him for *all things*, for all nature is in his hands; and at *all times*—in times of affliction, temptation, and darkness; for all power is with him to help. Trust him *with all thine heart*; with all sincerity and confidence, for His love, and grace, and mercy, are free and boundless, and "His delight is in all that trust in Him." "In *all thy ways* acknowledge Him;" look to Him, not only for protection and support, but also for guidance to be directed in a right course of conduct through life, and "He will direct thy steps."

Our text is a direct recognition of the doctrine of Providence, and perhaps it will be proper to dwell a little upon this point, before we proceed to the particular duty here enjoined.

It is not our design to enter into a metaphysical disquisition of the subject: such a course would be neither pleasant to us, nor profitable to you. "To the law and the testimony," is our constant motto, and this is both profitable and pleasant.

The providence of God consists in creating, sustaining, and governing. His *creating* providence, is the exercise of that power, by which all things are brought into being. His *sustaining* providence, is the constant exercise of that

power to uphold and keep in existence those things which He has created ; so that all creatures, " in Him live, and move, and have their being." This, some call the law, or course of nature ; but more scripturally, the divine will. " With Him is the fountain of life, and in His hand is the breath of every living thing." This sustaining influence extends to all creatures, from the most exalted to the meanest ; like the sun, its influence reaches to the high and low, to the noble and the ignoble. As an archangel could not exist at first without Him, so neither can he continue in being, independently of His power : and as the most insignificant and detestable reptile that creeps on the earth, was not beneath Him to create, so neither is it beneath Him to sustain. His hand guides the stars in their courses, and preserves them in their respective spheres ; He makes the outgoings of the morning and evening ; He causes the regular returns of summer and winter, of seed-time and harvest ; He appoints to man his habitation, and determines the number of his months ; " He gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens when they cry." So general is His providence, that it extends to the utmost bounds of creation ; and so minute, that " He numbers the very hairs of our heads, and suffers not a sparrow to fall on the ground without him."

His *governing* providence extends to all the actions of His creatures. The very clouds, which seem to wander so much at random through the air, are guided by His hand. " He scattereth his bright cloud, and it is turned round about by his counsels ; that they may do whatsoever He commandeth them upon the face of the earth ;" * He gives the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air, that instinct by which they are brought to our shores in their re-

* Job xxxvii. 11, 12.

spective seasons. "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming."*

It extends to all the actions of angels, men and devils. Angels go and come at his command. Devils cannot enter into a herd of swine without his permission. Soldiers cannot gain a victory, but it is from Him. "All this assembly shall know," says David, when advancing against the proud Philistines, "that the battle is the Lord's."

The arrow and the stone are guided by His hand, and if He says Ahab or Goliath shall die, however the former may disguise himself, the fatal dart will find its way through the joints of his armor. Senators cannot give wise counsel without his aid; hence, Ezra and Nehemiah ascribe it to God, that it was put into the heart of the king of Babylon to beautify the house of the Lord, and have mercy upon Israel. "He turned the hearts of their enemies," says the Psalmist, "to hate His people, and to deal subtilly with them." "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of waters, He turneth it whithersoever He will." Merchants cannot buy and sell and get gain, without His help and blessing, nor execute schemes without His providence. "It is the Lord that giveth thee power to get wealth." "Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow."† If further proof were necessary, we might point you to the whole train of prophecy and its fulfilment; to promises and their accomplishment. If He rule not in "the armies of heaven, and amongst the children of men;" if the elements and infernal spirits come not under His control; if He order not all

* Jer. viii. 7.

† James, iv. 13, 14.

things "after the counsel of His own will," how can we account for his promises to Abraham, and their exact fulfilment; and the predictions concerning the Messiah in his incarnation, sufferings, death, and the subsequent glory of the Church, and their minute accomplishment?

We are taught to consider all our afflictions as coming from the hand of God; hence, Job ascribes his sufferings to God, and when Shimei cursed David, he said, "Let him alone and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him."

Prayer is a direct acknowledgement of a superintending Providence. Why do we pray for this or that blessing, if He, to whom we pray, cannot so order events, that it shall be brought to pass?

We would further direct your attention to one fact, which, in our mind, is almost demonstrative evidence. Whence is it that the Bible has been preserved against the ravages of time, and in spite of opposition, the most deadly and determined that Satan could instigate, or man could exercise? Account for it, if you can, upon any other principle than that there is a superintending Providence, who has made it the object of his peculiar care, and has so ordered events, that His holy word should be transmitted pure and unadulterated from age to age.

Thus we have adduced, what we trust will be sufficient proof to all who make the word of God the standard of their faith. Whatever others may think, I would not be argued out of the belief of a Providence, for the favor of ten thousand princes. Rob me of the comfortable conviction that an invisible hand is guiding me through life, that infinite wisdom is ordering all my concerns, that infinite goodness is directing all things well, and you rob me of the sweetest solace of my life. Take my purse, you take

trash ; deprive me of my liberty, still my spirit is free ; blast my reputation, I may still be rich ; but rob me of my Providence, and what have I left ? You leave me the helpless victim of despair, and an exile in the world, without an eye to regard, a hand to guide, or an overshadowing wing to protect.

But despite all the cavils of carnal men, " the Lord reigns in the armies of heaven, and among the children of men." This is the persuasion that makes the Christian ever contented with his lot ; it is his trust in every extremity ; his cup of consolation in every hour of trial. He knows that there is a promise that " all things work together for good to them that love God," and he knows that there is a Providence which will bring about its fulfilment. It was this persuasion that prompted Noah to prepare an ark ; Abraham to leave his country, and offer up his only son ; Moses to lead the children of Israel through the wilderness ; Daniel to worship his God in the very jaws of the lion ; prophets and apostles to take their lives into their own hands, and declare the will and counsel of God ; and all his servants to cast their care upon Him, cheerfully to submit to his will, cordially to acquiesce in the events of life, and to prefer the path of duty, knowing that " He careth for them."

Having established the doctrine, the duty is most obvious ; " In all thy ways acknowledge Him." Make His will the supreme controller of thy actions, and seek His guidance in the whole course of thy life ; not in some only of thy works and ways, but in all ; not in thy spiritual concerns alone, but in thy temporal also ; not in business alone, but in thy pleasures : " In all thy ways acknowledge Him."

It is a question often asked, how may we discern the

will of Providence? We shall endeavor to give the answer, and thus show what it is to "acknowledge God in all our ways."

Having our faith fixed in the doctrine of Providence, the way to be directed in a right course of conduct is,

First, to make the word of God our rule.

It is from the word of God, that we are to learn the mind and will of God; there are directions there that will throw light upon any case; that word contains sufficient rules for our whole conduct through life, and we should look to see what there is in it, that will suit our particular case; we should look to the rules of duty which it holds forth, to help and guide us in directing every point.

We will suppose you to be in doubt in some particular case, how to act, or what course to take. Have you taken, seriously taken, the word of God for your guide? Have you considered whether it approves or condemns the projected course? It is not always easy to apply the general rules of Scripture to particular cases; and yet, we should bring every case to this as our rule, with the simple intention of knowing our duty, and we may generally discover whether it is consistent with the will of God or not. For instance, are you desirous to make a change in your situation, to embark in some new enterprize? you must first ask, "is it consistent with the Scripture rules of morality?" This question will apply in the case of smugglers, pirates, actors, and all caterers for the lusts and appetites of men.

If the object be in itself lawful, your next inquiry should be, whether the projected change is consistent with the rules of contentment; whether your motives be such as the Scripture allows; whether, with the example of Lot before your eyes, you may venture upon a removal or change, where your spiritual welfare will be endangered,

for the sake of some worldly advantage or pleasure. For my part, I think those Christians run a fearful risk of offending God, and injuring their souls, who, for the sake of gain, take up their abode in cities which are little better than Sodom, or in the wilderness, where the sound of the Gospel is not heard. Should persecution or poverty drive them from the home of their fathers, then they ought, like the first pilgrims to these shores, to take the word, and worship, and ministry of God with them. Better, far better, to lack the bread that perishes, than that which comes down from heaven. Hence, when God denounces his heaviest curse, He threatens a famine, not of bread but of the word. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.*

The great matter in appealing to the Scriptures, is to do it with a mind really determined to be directed by them, and not that we may find something to suit our inclinations and prejudices; otherwise we may expect to be deceived. We must really take the word of God for our rule, simply and fairly, not perverting it to our own purposes.

Here let me add a caution. Some use the Bible as a sort of a fortune-telling book; when a difficult case occurs, they will open their Bible at random, and observe what text strikes the eye, and according as their imagination may apply the passage to the point in question, so they judge of the will of God, call it a leading of Providence, and deem it a duty to act accordingly. "This is a very weak and dangerous practice, and a sad abuse of the word of God; applying it to a purpose for which the Holy Ghost never intended it. It savours much of enthusiasm

* Amos viii. 11.

and is not unlike tempting God." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly with all wisdom," and let your appeal to it, be honest, sincere, reverential, and according to the mind of God, and you will find it an excellent counsellor in all cases of difficulty and perplexity. But, you say that you have done this, and yet do not see your way clear; as far as you have consulted the word of God, you do not see any thing against your plans; you do not see that the proposed step would be inconsistent with the rules of morality and contentment, yet you find difficulties in your way. What must be done next?

We may be conscious that the thing itself is not displeasing to God, and yet not know whether it is His will that we should pursue it. Take an illustration. David's project to build a temple was not displeasing to God; on the contrary, he was assured that he did well, that it was in his heart; yet the privilege of erecting it, was reserved for his son. Take another of frequent occurrence. A Christian may desire the office of the ministry; that desire cannot be otherwise than pleasing to God, if the motive be pure; and yet there may be difficulty in ascertaining whether he himself is called to the work. The same may apply to other cases. We must therefore,

Secondly, acknowledge God and seek His direction, by observing the leadings of His Providence. We must consider the circumstances which favor or obstruct our designs, and this will often lead us to a discovery of the divine will. We should especially consult with friends, and weigh events in our own minds. We should consult with friends, and from this source, we may not unfrequently discover the will of God. We should weigh events in our own minds: we should look around us to observe what condition and circumstances we are in; we should turn our eyes and our thoughts about every way, in order to view our situation in

every point of light, that we may be enabled to form a right judgment in any measure we have on hand. Events will be arising to forward or hinder our purposes, and we should regard them as intimations of the mind of God. Those who make the word of God their guide, may expect that they shall not be left in darkness, with respect to his will.

But here you must guard your constitutional bias. "It is," as Mr. Cecil says, "a suspicious interpreter of providential leadings." A sanguine man sees a sign and token of approbation of his schemes in every thing; a retiring or slothful person, fancies that every difficulty is a mark of disapprobation, and is ever fancying that "there is a lion in the way," Nor are dreams or fancied revelations to be relied upon, now that the volume of God's word is complete. Providence must be followed, as the Israelites followed the pillar of cloud; and though it may lead you a circuitous rout, and in a way that you did not anticipate, it will assuredly lead you right.

Thirdly, we must acknowledge God by keeping His glory in view. Will such a change, or such a connection be for the glory of God? This is a question, my dear hearers, which we should often be asking. Suppose we have an opportunity to change our situation to our temporal advantage, here comes this serious question. Our advantage may not be the governing principle. In the choice of two situations, we must consider in which we shall have the best opportunity to promote the honor of God, our own spiritual advantage, and the good of others. This is the most signal manner of acknowledging God in our ways, and will ensure success, for, "them that honor me I will honor."

Fourthly. We must acknowledge Him, and seek His direction by prayer.

God has encouraged us to come to a throne of grace in every time of need ; our supplication should be earnest, serious, and submissive. We must not expect any secret revelations or impulses. Impulses of the mind are no criterion of the will of God. Satan often suggests thoughts with much energy to the mind. Our impressions must therefore be tried by the same touchstone as our actions ; we must examine them by the word of God, and, if they are sanctioned there, then they must be according to His will.

Nor are we to conclude from peculiar enlargements in prayer that God favors our designs ; the importance of the case may give earnestness to our petitions, and cause our words to flow. The simple way is, when we pray for guidance in any perplexity, to beg of God, that He would lead our thoughts by His Holy Spirit, into such a view of the directions of His word, and the leadings of His Providence, that we may thence be able to judge what is our path of duty ; that He would so order our affairs, as to make our way clear to us ; and that He would so fix our views, and incline our hearts, as to make us ready and willing to take such steps, and pursue such measures, as may be most conducive to His glory and our good. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God," and no doubt his doings will be ordered of the Lord.

Fifthly and lastly. We must "acknowledge God in all our ways" by leaving the event of all with Him. While we are found in the way I have been describing, we may venture with safety and confidence, to "cast all our care upon Him," and leave the issue in His hands.

This indeed, will require much self-denial ; and if we are defective here, our judgment may easily be warped. David practised a signal act of self-denial, when Saul lay

defenceless in the cave. He knew that it was the will of Providence that he should have the crown ; Abishai interpreted it to be a providential call to take it, but David judged otherwise, and he would rather forego the honor of wearing it forever, than take it with a hand stained in blood. He was willing to leave the accomplishment of the promise with Him who made it.

This course will require much patience. We must not hurry Providence. We must not go before our guide. The suspense may be painful to us, but we must *wait*. " We must tarry the Lord's leisure." The grand secret seems to be to " wait on the Lord and keep His way ;" thus allowing God to work in His own time and way. Rebecca and Jacob were deficient in this respect ; hence, they began to work with deceit to obtain the blessing ; and the blessing they did obtain, for so heaven had decreed, and the counsel of God must stand ; but it came with a rod ; hatred is sown between the two brothers ; Jacob is driven from his own home, and Rebecca never sees her darling son again ; whereas, had they left it with God, He would have accomplished it in the right time, and much more to their comfort and credit. Let us learn from them to acknowledge God in our ways, by leaving events with him.

We recapitulate the rules we have laid down.

We must acknowledge God in all our ways,

1st. By consulting His holy word to test the moral quality of the course we propose ; i. e. to learn whether it be in itself right or wrong.

2d. By observing the leadings of His providence.

3d. By keeping His glory in view.

4th. By praying for His direction and guidance.

5th. By waiting His time and leaving the event with Him. And so God will direct our steps ; not, it may be in

the way we desire, but in the *right* way—that which will bring us to His own presence, where there is “fulness of joy,” and to his “right hand, where there are pleasures forevermore.”

SERMON IV.

“According to your faith be it unto you.”—MATTHEW ix. 29.

It is obvious to every individual, who is at all acquainted with the gospel of Christ, that faith is a grace of pre-eminent importance. The Apostle Paul occupies one entire section of his incomparable epistle to the Hebrews, in defining its nature and effects. St Peter tells us that it is “much more precious than gold :” it is derived from a better *origin*. Gold is the product of the earth ; faith is the gift of God, and cometh down from heaven. It partakes of a better *nature*. Gold is but dust refined ; faith is a spiritual, incorruptible treasure. It is of more intrinsic *worth*. Gold may invest us with the favor of men, and many worldly advantages ; faith invests us with the favor of God, and all the blessings of eternity. “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus ;” “and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” Faith is the author of a better and more certain *hope*. That which springs from gold, will be swept away like the spider’s web, because it is built only on glittering dust ; but hope, the offspring of faith, will never perish, because it rests on the immutable rock of God’s own testimony ; “and heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot, or one tittle of his word shall never fail.” In short, so important, so precious is faith, that without it, no man can be saved. Next to the love of God, it is the most essential article to our salvation. From his love emanates every act

of mercy toward man ; and from our faith springs every act of holy, acceptable obedience to God. " Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin."

It is not our design to confine your attention to the narrative immediately connected with our text ; but from that and other instances of faith, in those who came to Christ to be healed, it will be our aim to illustrate the nature of saving faith ; and we conceive that they are most happily adapted to the case before us. It is obvious, that those miraculous performances were designed, not only to establish the Saviour's doctrines, and to confirm his mission, but also to illustrate and explain the *nature* of his doctrines, and to develop the *object* of his mission. There is, for instance, a striking analogy between the diseases of the body, and the moral maladies of the soul. The resemblance holds good in the extraordinary remedy in both cases. Who could have thought of Siloam's water restoring sight to the blind, or Bethesda's pool giving strength to the lame ? And who could have thought of deriving life and strength from the Redeemer's blood ? The instrument of healing is in both cases the same ; " if thou believest" was the language to the sick ; " if thou believest" is the language addressed to sinners ; " if thou believest, thou shalt be saved." Singly and collectively, our Saviour's miracles are " profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for instruction in righteousness." Individually, they usually illustrate some one important point ; collectively, they throw light upon truth generally. Thus, one is raised from the dead, to show us that men are dead in trespasses and sins, and that salvation is an act of sovereign grace ; another comes voluntarily to be healed, to teach us that God expects to find in us a willing mind ; a third is restored upon the prayer and faith of a friend, to show us the efficacy of fervent prayer in behalf of them that are out of the way. Collectively, these miracles teach us that all men

are by nature wretched and depraved ; that Christ is the only Saviour, and that salvation is through faith.

Before we enter further into our subject, we would make one remark, which will tend to divest it of that air of mystery which has been thrown around it by the labored explanations of men, who have but darkened counsel, by words without knowledge.

Our remark is, that faith, so far from being the most incomprehensible, is the simplest act of the mind. Faith, credence, or belief, is in every instance one and the same principle. It is not one thing in the common concerns of life, another in miracles, and another in salvation,—but is, as it has been well defined, in all cases, “*the influential belief of testimony.*” Thus the mariner believes upon the evidence of competent witnesses, that in certain parts, there are dangerous rocks, and it influences the course of his navigation. The sick believed upon sufficient ground, that Christ and his Apostles were able to heal their sicknesses, and they sought for relief. And upon the testimony of the word of God, we believe, that sin unpardoned, will be attended with awful consequences ; upon the same testimony, we believe that Christ is able and willing to save from the love, and power, and curse of sin, and this faith influences our heart and life.

With this remark premised, we proceed to illustrate the nature of that faith which is unto salvation, in the manner we have already proposed.

I. We observe, first, that saving faith is a principle of assurance.

By assurance, we do not mean that persuasion of the mind whereby one is enabled to say that he is in a state of salvation ; though we doubt not that this is a privilege which all Christians may attain, and towards which all Christians

ought continually to aim. That the disciples of old were evangelically assured of their gracious state, must be admitted, if there be any meaning in such declarations, as, "we know that we are of God," and "we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." That it may still be attained is equally manifest, if there be any propriety in urging Christians to "examine themselves, whether they be in the faith." But, that it is either generally attained, or that it is at all essential to the nature of saving faith, we are by no means warranted to affirm. It is indeed necessary to our peace and comfort, and when joy and consolation are most needed, this holy assurance is usually the most strong; witness saints in persecution, martyrs at the stake, and Christians on their sick and dying beds. The promise is, "as thy day is, so shall thy strength be;" but what can so fill the soul with resignation, and enable it to look forward to the last great change with composure, yea with desire, as an inward persuasion that we are the children of God? Let Christians then follow after this holy assurance in health and prosperity, or it may fail to succour them in sickness and adversity. Follow after it, Christians, in a way of holy obedience. It is not produced in the soul by an effort of the mind, but is the result of close walking with God. Follow after it; it will make thy soul fruitful in joy and peace; it will renew thy inner man with firm, unshaken strength; it will give thee "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

We have said, that faith is a principle of assurance; by which we mean a persuasion of the mind in the all-sufficiency of Christ. Thus, the Centurion's faith persuaded him that a word from Christ could as easily control the disease

of his servant, as his command would ensure obedience from the soldiers placed under his authority. Thus, the faith of the woman, who had many years tried the skill of physicians and could not be healed, persuaded her, that if she might "but touch the hem of his garment, she would be made whole." Thus, Martha was assured, that whatever Jesus asked of his Father, it would be done; "I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Here, in each instance, is a full persuasion of Christ's sufficiency to meet each individual case. But what gave such energy to their faith? The known ability and benevolence of the object of their faith. Their confidence was grounded upon *testimony*. They knew the promise which testified of the Messiah, that when he came, "the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that the lame man should leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb should sing." They had heard or seen that the promise was verified; "the dead were raised, the lepers cleansed, and the blind received their sight;" and it gave birth in them, to a vigorous, active faith.

Upon such testimony, O sinner! such faith is demanded from thee, in His sufficiency to bring salvation to thy soul. Observe, we assume the idea, that you are sensible of your state as a sinner; that you feel yourself polluted as a leper; helpless as a paralytic; wretched as a demoniac; and unless a Saviour can be found, as inevitably exposed to eternal ruin, as ever any disease subjected any mortal frame to temporal death. Is the assumption false? Ah! my hearer, it is in vain then that we talk with you of faith in Christ, for the whole need not, and they who fancy themselves whole will not seek a physician, but they that are sick. Go thou first, and learn that "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint," and that a malignant distemper pervades

the whole soul. But, may we not hope that there are some present, who felt in their hearts, while they confessed with their lips, that there is no health in them! From such, we say, upon such testimony, a firm faith is demanded in the sufficiency of Him who came into the world to save sinners. Here is the testimony of God concerning his Son, "that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is the evidence of a great cloud of witnesses, that "He is able to save to the very uttermost, all that come unto God by him." And then for your confirmation, lift up your eyes to that glorious scene which the Apostle saw, and behold "a great multitude which no man can number, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" and tell us, what is there in your case, O penitent sinner! that places you beyond the reach of mercy so extensive, beyond the virtue of blood so efficacious? Are your sins *great*? so were theirs. Are they *numerous*? so were theirs. Are they *aggravated*? so were theirs. Only one thing can place you beyond the reach of divine goodness, and that is an evil heart of unbelief. Would you enjoy the comforts of pardoning mercy, of sanctifying grace, and the hope of glory? Get a firm persuasion of the ability and willingness of Christ to save from all sin. The more implicitly we depend on Christ, and expect great things from Him, the more we honor Him with our unwavering confidence; the more evidently will He honor us with His salvation. His language to us, is "according to your faith be it unto you."

II. Our second remark on the nature of true saving faith is, that it is an *active* principle; it stimulates to immediate exertion; it admits not of careless ease, nor of carnal security.

Is the sinner convinced of his wretched state? Has he

heard of a Saviour? Does he credit the testimony? He makes immediate application to that Saviour, and persists in his application, until the Saviour graciously replies, "thy sins are forgiven, go in peace." But let us see how this fact also is illustrated by the halt, the maimed, and the blind. When they believed, they came to Christ, like the ten lepers. If they were not able to come, they caused themselves to be brought, like the man sick of a palsey. And if they could neither come, nor be brought, then like Lazarus, they sent for Christ. Faith always persisted, by some means, in making application; it persevered against every discouragement; it surmounted every difficulty; it would take no denial. Can they not for the throng, approach where Jesus is? Faith prompts them to ascend the roof of the house, and let down into His presence, the bed whereon the paralytic lies. Do the disciples charge Bartimeus to hold his peace? Faith constrains him to "cry out so much the more a great deal, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." Does Jesus himself, seem to repel the Canaanitish woman? Faith can take no denial, it finds an argument even in the discouragement; "and she answered, and said, truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

So, faith in Christ as a Saviour, is incompatible with sloth; it is the spring of the soul; the instant it operates, that moment it is said, "*Behold he prayeth.*" The sinner apprehends his danger, and he must avoid it. It is an impulse of reason, if danger threatens, to urge an immediate escape; it is an impulse of grace, to urge a like escape from eternal ruin. Self-preservation is the first law of nature; self-preservation is the first law of faith. Let the arrow of conviction strike deeply into the heart; let the terrors of hell flash upon the conscience; let the prospect of

salvation open upon the eye of faith, and the man will as naturally flee for the life of his soul, as any would flee from a pestilence, or a serpent. Many, indeed, there are, who think themselves good believers, who are not at all conscious of having ever thus cared for their salvation. But that faith which is not preceded by a sense, a deep sense, of sin and danger, which drives not a man from every refuge of lies, which leads not the soul with humility and penitence to the foot of the cross, and which forms not the holy resolution if it perishes, to die with the prayer for mercy on the faltering tongue, is not faith, and they are not believers. No, they are spiritually leprous, and blind, and dead. Faith in Christ, let it always be remembered, is not only the *belief* of testimony, but, it is an *influential* belief. Hence, wherever it exists, it leads the soul to the Saviour with the same diligence, earnestness, and determination, which we have seen displayed in those who came to him to be healed of their bodily infirmities. It may be attended with a deep sense of unworthiness, it may be reproved and discouraged, it may even be led to exclaim, "hath God forgotten to be gracious?" But, it always prays, and never faints; the suit must be gained; it can take no denial. It looks at the promise, and fastens upon it like an anchor, sure and steadfast, until He who gave the word says, "according to thy faith be it unto thee."

Nor does this holy principle affect the *life* less than the heart. Let it not then be branded as tending to pride and licentiousness. No, it is the spring, the only spring of that obedience which God requires from His creatures. "Faith, purifies the heart, and works by love."

When it has brought salvation to the soul, the believer persists in following Jesus in the way; in the way of holiness. He is not, indeed, solicitous to obtain salvation by the

works of the law ; but, because he sees such deformity in sin, such beauty in holiness ; and because therein, his father which is in heaven is glorified ; therefore he is zealous in good works, and all the frowns or smiles, the rebukes or allurements of the world, cannot turn him aside from his purpose to “walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless.” Faith inoperative? As well might believing Noah have disobeyed the divine command ;—or Lot have lingered in Sodom ;—or the Israelites have refused to escape from their bondage. Noah believed, and therefore “he prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” Lot believed, and therefore he fled for his life. The Israelites believed, and therefore “they forsook Egypt, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness,” and entered into the promised land. And according to every man’s faith, so will be his “bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness, charity.”

Such is faith, in its genuine nature, and highest degree of excellence. But, we have a third remark to make, drawn also from the conduct of those who came to Christ to experience his healing power, which we would not withhold, for the sake of those with whom it is “a day of small things :” viz.

III. That in different individuals there are *various degrees* of faith.

Thus, we find that one is persuaded of the *ability* of Christ, but he doubts his *willingness*. “There came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou *wilt*, thou canst make me clean.” He had heard or seen demonstrations of his power, but he knew not the extent of his goodness, or perhaps he regarded himself as unworthy of such a favor ; but he had faith enough to pray, and his prayer was heard, and he was cleansed.

The father of the lunatic child, doubts of his *ability*, but he has confidence in his *goodness*. He thought it a hard case, and knew not whether such a complication of diseases could be removed. It was a lunatic, and dumb, and possessed ; it had been so from a child ; he had applied to the disciples and they had failed, and he knew not but that the Master might also fail ; and who can wonder that his faith was not of the highest cast ? But, mark, he had faith enough to cry out, "if thou *canst* do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Christ pitied his infirmity, and healed his son.

When Peter ventured on the deep at his Lord's command, there was within him a strange conflict between confidence and fear. Under the pressure of unbelief, he began to sink, but he had faith enough to pray, and He who cannot hear the prayer of faith in vain, soon stretched out his omnipotent arm, and delivered him at once from his dangers and his doubts.

Thus, the sinner seeking salvation, may be assailed with many apprehensions, but where there is "faith as a grain of mustard seed," there is enough to remove a mountain of corruption. Where there is faith to bring the sinner to Christ, though he comes with a trembling step, there is enough to bring salvation to the soul. Where the cry is heard, "Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief ;" "Lord save, or I perish ;" he may chide, but he will not deny our request.

Christians should, however, rebuke their souls for their little faith, as David did ;—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul ! and why art thou disquieted within me !" It is dishonorable to God, to mistrust his sufficiency or goodness. The testimony which he has given, demands our fullest confidence, and we ought to aim at a firm and lasting as-

surance in the divine word. The faith which honors God most, and brings peace on its swiftest wing, is that which "staggers not at the promise of God through unbelief." Know this, weak believer, that while Christ "will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," he delights to know them most, who most honor him. "According to your faith," whether it be weak or strong, so it shall be done unto you.

To conclude—O! ye who labor under a sense of sin, who feel the malady of your souls, and yet fear to go to Christ, our subject speaks to you. It seems to say, come, poor sinner, come to Jesus; he stands ready to save to the very uttermost, and all that he demands is thy faith; and how reasonable that thou shouldest commit thy soul into the hands of thy Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, a being of matchless wisdom, truth, power, and love. Sinner, art thou still fearful, still unbelieving? "Wherefore do ye doubt, O ye of little faith?" What could the Lord Jesus have done more for your encouragement that he has not done? Are you *polluted*? He withholds not his touch from the foulest disease. Is your case *inveterate*, does it defy all earthly skill? Winds, and storms, and unclean spirits obey his voice. Do you deem yourself *unworthy*? Even publicans and harlots share in his mercy. But, you say that there is an infinite disparity between the diseases of the body and the soul. The Son of man, when on earth, forgave sins also. And is he less condescending, less compassionate, less kind, now he is in Heaven, than when on earth? No, he is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." And all that he demands from thee, is thy faith. Only believe, and "according to your faith shall it be unto you."

Unbelievers, our subject speaks to you. In this class

we rank all those who believe the Bible, as they believe the history of Greece or Rome, who know no other species of faith, than that which they derive from the circumstance of being born in a Christian land, who never mourned over sin and corruption as their greatest curse, who never felt the leprosy lie deep within, who never panted for the healing power of the balm of Gilead, more than for restoration to health; and who never desire to be saved from the *love* and *power* of sin, with the same intensity that they desire deliverance from its *curse*. You dishonor God in the highest degree: you deny his veracity, and dispute his power; you place more confidence in the word of a fallible creature, than in the word of your infallible Creator. Were some fellow-mortal, upon whose integrity you had the least reliance, to tell you that a pestilence raged in such a place, or that such a man was unworthy of your confidence, you would avoid both the one and the other. But God, who cannot lie, tells you, that the way of the world is the way of death, and yet you love the world, and the things that are in the world. He tells you that your "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," but you think and say that whatever your foibles may be, your hearts are good. He tells you that no man can be saved but by grace alone though faith, and yet you will place your hopes on your good works.

Why do you thus reject the counsel of God? Is it for want of *testimony*? Was it for want of testimony that the Antediluvians perished by the flood; or the Sodomites by fire; or the Egyptians by the judgments of Heaven? Nay, but because their hearts were fully set in them to do evil. And if you believe not, it is because you love sin, and hate holiness, and because your "carnal mind is enmity against God," so that you are without excuse; and our subject

speaks to you in language which may unclothe the joints of the loins, and make the knees tremble, and every face gather blackness, and every heart faint for fear. "According to your *unbelief* be it unto you." That is, in the plain language of the Gospel, "your *damnation* slumbereth not." "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shalt be *damned*."

SERMON V.

"But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—ROMANS X. 6—9.

The "righteousness of the law," of which we sometimes read, is the obedience which the law requires, "by which no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God." The "righteousness which is of faith," is that which we derive from Christ by inspiration, through faith in Him. The Apostle personifies, and represents the latter, as reasoning with, or answering the objections of a convinced sinner against the general method of salvation. The character supposed, seems to lie under a terrible apprehension of his own guilt and danger; and, so far to have escaped from error, as to be on the very confines of truth; yet certain cavils are secretly working in his heart. He is conscious of his guilt, and yet cannot give a cordial reception to the righteousness of faith. This prejudice against the way of salvation by faith, is not peculiar to any age or nation; it

is unlimited and universal as the depravity of man, or the dominion of the evil one. To the Jews, long wedded to the ceremonial law, it was a grievous stumbling block. "The righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ," dissolved their long enjoyed privilege as a peculiar people, God's only Church; for, "His righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe." It abolishes the priesthood, which they knew to be of divine origin; for, there is "no need of priests to offer oftentimes the blood of beasts, seeing Christ has, by his own blood, taken away sin," and is now the only intercessor between God and man. It made void their ceremonies and carnal ordinances, "in that they are weak and could not make the comers thereunto perfect." And, that which is most humbling to the pride of human nature, it makes self-righteousness of no effect in the great matter of justification; for, "by Christ alone, all that believe are justified."

Though we are not entangled with the trammels of Judaism, let us not suppose that we are entirely escaped from the same snares of unbelief. No: as "all men are of one blood," so they are partakers of one nature. Circumstances are changed, but Satan has a device for every age, for every people, and for Christians in every stage of their experience. Self-righteousness is the idol of every unrenewed heart; it is the strong man armed; it is the barrier to reconciliation between God and man; it is, in all its modifications, a deadly bane to holiness, happiness and salvation.

It is natural to a mind just roused to a sense of its danger, just emerging from darkness, to start many objections, and to raise many doubts and difficulties; but the righteousness of faith answers them all. Mark—it is *faith*, not *reason* that answers them. Reason cannot, for there are

many points beyond its stretch ; but faith can, because it rests on simple testimony. Where reason's plummet fails, faith can fathom ; where reason staggers, faith is steadfast ; where reason breaks, faith will bend. Reason is satisfied with nothing less than the complete solution of every difficulty, the entire comprehension of the *rationale* of the whole subject ; whereas it is enough for faith, that God has spoken.

Take, for instance, the threatened Deluge. Reason perhaps told the learned of those days, as it has the sceptics of our own times, that such an event is contrary to the principles of sound philosophy, and that the sea does not contain water enough to drown the world ; but God said, "it shall be," and Noah believed ; and while they sank, with all their reasoning, into a watery grave, he, in the life-boat of faith, floated safely on the bosom of the deep. And thus will it ever be with those, who reject faith, and worship at the shrine of reason. She is a blind goddess, and with all her pretensions to wisdom, will at last lead all her votaries into the whirlpool of perdition. Faith is a certain pilot that guides to a sure haven. It is to faith then, dear distressed soul, that you must look for a solution of all difficulties, for an answer to all your doubts ; or, rather let the righteousness of Christ give the answer, and let faith receive and act upon it.

We are not ignorant of the workings of such a mind as we have supposed ; we shall notice some of them, and endeavor to give such answers, as the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ may furnish, in the humble hope, that any, here present, who may be "laboring in the fire, and wearying themselves for very vanity," may be brought forth purified from the dross of unbelief, and enabled to embrace Christ in the arms of faith.

I. The first cry of the soul under a sense of guilt, is, "What shall I do? To whom shall I go? Oh, that there were one able and willing to save such a sinner as I!" What saith the "righteousness of faith?" Say not, Oh, that there were such a Saviour! but what saith it? "Help is laid upon one that is mighty." He saw thee and pitied thee, when thou wast removed by sin to an infinite distance from God, and He stretched out His Almighty arm to deliver thee, and to bring thee back. All the obstacles which lay in thy way are removed. Thy transgressions are drowned in the ocean of His love; the curse of a broken law was silenced when He said, "It is finished;" the justice of an offended Deity is appeased; and though sin has closed the way of salvation by works, Christ has opened a new way, a way of salvation "by grace alone, through faith."

It is not necessary that thou shouldest provide a Saviour, for Christ is set forth to be the Saviour of all that believe, a Mediator between God and man; and all that He requires is, that thou shouldest come to Him, tell Him thy case, spread thy woes before Him, trust thyself in His hands, so shalt thou be saved.

II. Oh! exclaims the distressed soul, "that I knew where I might find Him!" I would bathe his feet in penitential tears, I would pour out my soul into his bosom, and move Him to compassion by my cries; but I know not where He dwells.

But what saith the righteousness of faith? "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above? or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring Christ up again from the dead?" The Saviour is not in the insurmountable heights above, nor in the unfathomable depths beneath, nor at the uttermost ends of the world. No, He is nigh thee. He is "about thy bed and about thy

path;" in thy closet and in the sanctuary; His word sounds in thy ear; His hand knocks at the door of thy heart; that is "the word of faith which we preach." And what saith it? It does not say, if thou wilt make satisfaction for thy sins; if thou wilt perform a wearisome pilgrimage; if thou wilt mortify the flesh with murderous austerities; or, if thou wilt do some great thing, thou shalt be saved. But, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth;" if thou wilt acknowledge, and confess, and bewail thy "manifold sins and wickedness:" if thou dost confess that thou art a hell-deserving sinner, and that God would be just, should He consign thee over to the "blackness of darkness" forever. If thou shalt confess Him before man, openly and in opposition to all difficulties, profess his religion, adhere to his truth, and observe his ordinances and commandments; and, if this confession proceeds from faith in thine heart; if thou believe in all the testimony which God has given concerning Jesus Christ, and shall trust in Him as thy Saviour; if thou believe in thy heart that Christ lived, and died, and rose again, for thy justification: if thou thus "believe unto righteousness," or, by faith receive the righteousness of Christ as thy righteousness; and with thy mouth make confession, and ratify both by a holy life, thou shalt be saved; for, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

O, blessed terms! exactly suited to a sinner who has nothing to give. If God required from us only one farthing, one sinless act, it would be an amount we could not pay. But, it is now only ask and have; touch the sceptre and be pardoned; look to Jesus and be saved; stretch out thy hand and be made whole. Who would not be saved, when salvation is offered "without money, and without price?"

Hard, proud, and impenitent indeed, must be that heart, which would rather be lost than saved by grace.

III. But an evil heart objects, "the subject is involved in such mystery, that I know not what to do? I see not how God can be 'just and the justifier of him that believeth;' I see not how He can lay the sins of the guilty on the head of the innocent; I see not how many other difficulties can be solved; they are too high, too deep for me."

What says the Gospel? If reason cannot, Faith can. If human intellect cannot embrace that which is incomprehensible, a divine intellect can. "The righteousness which is of faith," saith, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, thou shalt be saved."

Admitting that salvation by grace is connected with mysteries high as heaven, deep as hell; this need not hinder your receiving it by faith. Can we not navigate the ocean until we have fathomed its depths? Can we not enjoy the light of the sun, and behold the glory of the moon and stars, until we have scanned their height? Why then can we not believe and be saved, even though the method of salvation be a mystery to us? Say not the way of salvation is dark and inexplicable; it is "so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." Perplex not your minds with curious and useless enquiries, but take that which God has revealed, as you take that which God has made, and be thankful. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us." Say not that the plan is hid in the secret councils of God, or is involved in obscurity and mysticism; "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." However it may have been "hid from ages and from generations, it is now made manifest to his saints," and if we perish, it is with a Saviour in view. If we die in our sins we are with-

out excuse ; if we go into the pit, it is because we close our eyes to the light of a noonday sun. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

IV. There is another mistake which naturally fastens on the mind of one in the state which we have described, more common, but not less fatal than the preceding.

The individual is perhaps sensible that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour : but the query arises, "what must I do that I may become interested in Him, that I may have all the benefits of his redemption?" The idea connected with this enquiry usually is, that in some measure, in some way or other, we must *qualify* ourselves before we may venture to come to Christ for salvation ; and the baneful idea derives strength from its apparent propriety ; and from passages of Scripture which enjoin various moral duties, as essential to the Christian character, and necessary to, or forming parts of the plan salvation.

First. The convinced sinner thinks it necessary that he should prepare himself by a *sufficient measure of repentance*, before he can venture to approach the Saviour, because it is written, "Repent ye and believe the Gospel." He conceives that certain depths of sorrow, certain despairing thoughts, certain horrors of conscience, must be felt, and a certain amount of tears must be shed, and then that his repentance will prove acceptable and available. And we dare not say that these must not be known and felt : yea, repentance is an essential ingredient of true godliness ; for, "God commands all men, every where, to repent." But, we say, that we are to place no confidence in repentance. Judas and Esau were in an agony, and yet "it had been good for them never to have been born." There is no efficacy in penitential tears to take away sin. We may shed rivers of tears and not wash away one stain.

We may not give any priority to repentance before faith. Were we compelled to place one grace before the other, it would be faith ; for what is repentance but a turning from sin and Satan to God ? and what way is there of turning to God, but by "believing that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." But, we would rather put them together as cause and effect. The soul never so completely loathes sin, and itself on account of sin, as when it is led by the hand of faith to the cross of Christ. Genuine tears of repentance flow only from the eye of faith, looking upon a crucified Saviour. "They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn." The soul never so ardently hates sin, as when it has some confidence in the mercy of God. The mere workings of the law, and the terrors of hell flashing upon the conscience, may alarm the soul, and generate the repentance of the traitor, but it is a look from Jesus, seen by the eye of faith, that breaks the heart.

The "righteousness which is of faith" says, if thou feelest thy sins to be thy curse, wait not until thou hast descended to the lowest depths of sorrow, but look at once unto Jesus. Let faith look upon him, and draw virtue from his broken flesh and bleeding veins, then,

" Will humble, penitential woe,
With painful, pleasing anguish flow ;
And his forgiving love impart,
Life, hope and joy to every heart."

Second. The convinced sinner thinks it necessary that he should submit himself to Christ as a *Lord* and *Lawgiver*, before he can receive him as a Saviour ; because it is written, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

Most true it is that none can be saved but such as sub-

mit to his authority : but, there is no returning to our allegiance, there is no submission to his will and government, except in the obedience of faith. The Lord Jesus Christ is revealed as a Saviour, as well as a King, and we never can be willing servants, or obedient subjects, until we submit to be saved by grace. We never can be brought under the rod of his government, until we have, by faith, touched the sceptre of his mercy. "Being made free from sin, we became servants to God." "Truly," says David, "I am thy servant, for thou hast loosed my bonds." The "righteousness which is of faith" says, "say not in thy heart, I will first keep His laws, and then sue for His grace ; it will be as hard a task as if thou shouldest undertake "to bring up Christ again from the dead ;" but first, believe in thy heart, and that will subdue thy enmity, and make "his yoke easy and his burden light."

Third. Because we are required to forgive men their trespasses, and to make restitution for every wrong done to them, therefore the convinced sinner is led to imagine that these acts must be performed, before he can venture to trust in Christ. True, these things must be done, or we must be willing and desirous to do them, or we cannot pray acceptably, nor use the means of grace profitably. But they must be done from right motives or principles : not from dread of punishment—so Pharaoh let the people of Israel go, and perished at last: not from remorse of conscience—so Judas restored the thirty pieces of silver, and afterwards went and hanged himself: not for our justification, or to afford us a plea for forgiveness before God—so the Pharisee boasted that he was not an extortioner, nor unjust, but he was not justified in the sight of God.

They must emanate from love and faith. An apprehension of the mercy of God through Christ by faith, generates in us the same mind that was in Christ. Forgiveness and

restitution are rather proofs or pledges that we are forgiven, than reasons why we should be so ; they follow after, rather than precede our pardon ; when "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us," then are we "kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another."

Fourth. These legal principles, leaving the plea of merit, finally transform themselves into pretended jealousy for the honor of God, and teach the soul to reason thus : "Surely, to approach God in my defiled garments, without any decent preparation, is to put a gross indignity upon Him ; and does not our Lord, in the parable of the marriage supper, check such an unsanctified approach. All were welcome but he who had not on a wedding garment, and shall I approach God in my native deformity and uncleanness ? I will get more purity of heart and life ; I will put myself in a proper state to receive God's gifts, and then I will go with boldness to supplicate His grace and mercy." But, what says the King ? "All things are ready : " not only the feast, but the garments. And who were brought to the feast ? Not those who were rich and splendidly arrayed, but the halt and the maimed and the blind. And who were rejected ? Not those who were destitute of suitable raiment, but those who were too negligent, or too proud to take the garment of the King's providing. And what says the "righteousness of faith ?" "All things are ready." Whatever is necessary for justification, for sanctification, for complete salvation, is freely, abundantly provided. Come ye wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ; ye who have nothing to recommend you to the favor of God but your penury, and want, and unworthiness ; wait not till you are better, or you will never come at all. Come in all your nakedness, and deformity, and guilt, and you shall never want a robe of righteousness. Come, as the prodigal did, and, like him, you shall be clothed with the "best robe ;" a garment that will

hide all your shame, and make you lovely and comely in the eyes of the King, the Lord of Hosts.

Is there then no qualification necessary, before a sinner may come to Christ, and look upon him and be saved? No! none, except such as the Samaritan harlot, Zaccheus the extortioner, and Saul the persecutor, might boast. They were stricken with a sense of guilt, they were directed to the Saviour, they received him by faith, and immediately "they were washed, they were sanctified, they were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The simple truth is, you must tarry for nothing: Christ will supply all your lack: no other fitness He requires but to feel your need of him."

All these particulars which we have been considering, and which you regard as preparing you for grace and mercy, are rather the immediate attendants on faith, or follow after justification.

Has man then no part to act in the great matter of salvation? None by way of *deserving* or *procuring*—that Christ has done—but he has by way of *receiving*. Whilst the righteousness which is of faith, triumphs over all obstacles, and forbids us to dishonor the Saviour's grace, by bringing a price in our hands; it demands and urges, and pathetically exhorts us, to accept the blessings fully purchased, and freely bestowed. Man's part is to receive. Simple, humble affiance is all that the gospel requires; and will you not receive the testimony of God's word? Will you discredit that which he has confirmed by an oath? Can you do such violence to your souls, as to refuse salvation so free, so complete? Behold! here is an open door, wide enough to receive all who enter by faith.

Enter then, ye who are weary and heavy laden with the burden of sin. Enter, ye who have nothing but sin and mis-

ery to commend you to his notice. Enter, ye who have been long "laboring in vain and spending your strength for nought," and "ye shall find rest for your souls."

Are you afraid to venture? Wherefore do ye doubt, oh ye of little faith? Has not God said that whosoever believeth shall be saved? Nor has He left us bare words; He has given us instances of His grace. The man who penned our text, stands forth as a monument to the Church of God in every age, to attest the infallibility of the word, and the efficacy of the Righteousness which is of faith. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."* If then Saul of Tarsus found mercy upon the first act of faith, need you despair?

But let us guard the doctrine against perversion. Though there is no preparation for the exercise of faith, unless indeed you call a deep sense of sin, and an apprehension of wrath, a preparation, yet fruits do follow. As he will never come to Christ, who waits till he has shed a sufficiency of tears, and submitted himself to God, and forgiven his enemies, and made restitution to those whom he has injured, and provided himself with personal holiness; so, on the other hand, that man has never been to Jesus, or ever believed on Him to the saving of his soul, in whom these precious fruits are not to be found. That salvation which is appended to the righteousness of faith, implies more than deliverance from the bitter pains of eternal death—that is the remote result. It brings a present salvation; it is attended with immediate consequences; and they are, deliverance from the love and power of sin. That which once appeared lovely and fruit to be desired, is now hateful as the grapes of Sodom. That which was once our master, is

now beaten down under our feet. Faith in Christ dissolves the charms of sin, breaks its fascinating hold, and makes the sinner free indeed. Faith in Christ gives vigor and energy to the powers of the soul, and is the root and spring of every holy act; whilst legality is pernicious to the practice of all holiness and our whole salvation.

My brethren, renounce all dependence upon your fig-leaf righteousness; it will leave you strangers to peace, easy victims to temptation, and heirs to perdition: whilst the righteousness which is of faith, will give you peace with God, prepare a way for your escape from every allurements, and secure a place at God's right hand.

May you, my beloved brethren, by faith receive that imputed righteousness which is "clear as the sun," that inherent righteousness which is "fair as the moon," and thus be to all your enemies, "terrible as an army with banners."

SERMON VI.

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them upon her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, there was no strange God with him.—DEUT. xxxii. 11.

The king of birds, combining as it does, more admirable qualities than any other fowl, forms a royal similitude. It has strength to mount above all, swiftness to outstrip all, an eye that penetrates the very fountain of light, affection that draws forth its blood for its young, and a sagacity, almost human, in instructing and disciplining them, which is specially noted in our text.

The allusion is to the Jews. The subject illustrated, is their deliverance out of Egypt and their preservation in the wilderness; "Ye have seen," says He, "what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself."*

But there is another nation to whom this language is as applicable. There is a spiritual Israel whom He has brought from the house of their bondage, and is leading onward and upward to their rest in the munition of rocks on the everlasting hills. We propose to show how God ac-

* EX. xix. 4.

completes this gracious work. Without doing violence to the similitude, we notice four things ; *admonition, allurements, assistance and protection.* Thus God acts for, and upon, and with his people, when He brings them from nature to grace, and from grace to glory.

I. God uses divine *admonitions*, "As the eagle stirreth up her nest." When the eagle thinks it time for her young ones to leave their nest, she moves it with great gentleness and affection ; she sees them sleeping and unwilling to relinquish their first home ; she makes a noise and strikes her wings against the surrounding branches ; then, having awoke them, she disturbs them still further ; and finally, "stirreth up," turns the nest inside out, and compels them to take to the crags of the rocks, or to the boughs of the trees. This is one step towards mounting up.

Thus did God with Israel. They were comparatively at ease by the flesh pots of Egypt ; and if they had been allowed to remain thus at ease, they would have continued as dull of understanding, as when Moses smote the Egyptian, "supposing that they would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them ; but they understood not."*

But God "stirred up their nest" by moving the heart of Pharaoh against them, until they cried for deliverance. So, God finds sinners at ease ; they prosper, their children are about them, they love the world and forget God ; but God forgets not them. They forget the curse that is written against such as are "at ease in Zion," but God does not ; He has purposes of love towards them. They are unwilling to think that this is not their rest, unwilling to rise and stretch their wings towards a higher and a better world. God calls, but they refuse to hear ; He calls again—"rise,

* Acts vii. 25.

come away"—they nestle but the closer; He stirs them up: sickness invades their dwelling, a wife is taken away with a stroke, or a husband dies in the pride and vigor of manhood, or a darling child is blighted in the bud; it is yet in vain. Not willing that they should perish, He comes next to break up their nest. The sails of commerce are rent; business is blighted; schemes are frustrated; property is wasted; the stately store, where thousands were once accumulated, passes into the hands of various creditors; they are turned out of house and home;

"Where once they dwelt, their name is heard no more,
Children, not theirs, now tread the nursery floor."

God has destroyed their nest; He admonishes them that "this is not their rest;" He brings them out of their comforts, to point them to the skies. Afflictions, if any thing, will make a man seek after God. When Manasseh, who was a monster in wickedness, "was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly," &c. *

When the prodigal son began to be in want, he took up the pious resolution to return to his father's house. When God called Abraham, He, as it were, turned him out of his nest,—“Get thee out of thy country,” &c,—then he became the father of the faithful. When Jacob was driven from the parental roof, he held such intercourse with heaven as he never did before; and when danger threatened him, and his wives, and his children, he obtained the blessing and Jacob became Israel; the supplanter was transformed into a princely prevailer with God. David went astray until he was afflicted. Few, very few, in their prosperity seek after God: and if affliction fail to draw the soul from sin

to holiness, and from the world to Heaven, God says, "Let him alone"—it is his last message.

If the young eagles will not step from their shattered nest, to the inviting bough or crag, they must fall and die. And if men will not, when the world is knocked from under them, place themselves in an attitude to look for another and a better, God says—"Let them alone, they are joined to their idols, let their idols save them."

Brethren, God is stirring up men's nests—not that He delights to afflict, but, that He may bless, that He may save. Oh, hear! oh, obey! When riches take wing and fly away, "covet earnestly the best gifts"—"Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness"—Seek the wisdom which is from above "as for silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God"—"Search for me with all your heart and ye shall find me." Transfer that diligence and skill which have been applied to "vanity and vexation of spirit," to God and thy soul, and thou shalt have "riches which add no sorrow, and an inheritance incorruptible:" but if thou wilt not hear and be wise, then, "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." †

II. We are met with divine *allurements*.

The eagle "fluttereth over her young;" "hovers over them, and excites them to imitate her and take their flight." (Cruden.) Thus the Lord moved Israel to leave Egypt; and thus, speaking by His prophet Hosea of their restoration from Babylon, and especially of their conversion to Christ, He says—"I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." ‡ And thus, my

* Prov. ii. 4, 5.

† Obad. 4.

‡ Hos. ii. 14, 15.

brethren, He allures you, by discoveries of His anxiety for your salvation; of His more than parental love; and by assurances that He will go with you in every step of your heavenward course, to succor and support you. He declares His unwillingness that any should perish. How tenderly He calls! "Rise up my love, my fair one, come away." How graciously He promises! "Surely I will be with thee." He is not indeed with us in the "pillar and the cloud," but He is, in the person of His Son; He took our nature upon him, that we might rise to his nature; He came down to earth, to allure us to Heaven: He could not be an example of Repentance, but He could invite us to it by His most gracious promises; He could show us how to live in the world; and yet how diverse from the world. He showed us that to do the will of the Father, is more truly our meat and drink, than our daily bread; and in His death and rising again, that death has lost its terrors and the grave its gloom; that it is better to pass through the dark valley of death and the gate of the grave into heaven, than to tarry on this side its portals and remain in the flesh, the heir of sin and sorrow and all the ills of life.

When the eagle flutters over its young, it shows what can be done. When Christ passed through things temporal, unensnared by their temptations, unpolluted by their contaminations, He showed what can be done. He, indeed, did it by His own underived power; we, by His "strength made perfect in our weakness." When the old eagle rises to the sun, she, in effect, tells her young that it is a purer, better clime than where they have been nestling; and it is said that the eagle never dies but of old age, because of the pure region in which it soars.

When the Lord Jesus rose to heaven, He taught us that there is a brighter, better world, and that they who inhabit it, die no more.

“ Rise my soul and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace,
Rise from transitory things,
Towards heaven, thy destined place—

Sun, and moon, and stars decay,
Time shall soon this earth remove,
Rise my soul and haste away
To seats prepared above.”

Is there not enough to woo you from sin and the world? Are not the motives of the Gospel sufficient? Can you find one of the great cloud of witnesses to testify that he has erred in spurning the world, and making that better land his portion and his home? Is there an inhabitant in those realms of light, who would return to these shores of darkness, and all that darkness symbolizes? Can you find a better portion—a portion better suited to your immortal nature? Then why is not that portion for you? Why should it not be your everlasting home? Rise, sinner, rise! “Heaven opens on the eyes, sounds seraphic burst on the ears,” not of the dying Christian only, but of the living Christian, who daily mounts on the wings of faith and love, towards that blest place, where Jesus, our forerunner, is for us entered.

Leave it to birds of meaner wing, to hop from spray to spray in this wilderness; rather, leave earth to earth-born worms; but ye, who were made but little lower than the angels, rise into the atmosphere of angels, and eat “angels’ food,” and soon shall ye be crowned with honor and glory above them.

III. We have for our comfort and encouragement, the assurance of divine *assistance*.

“When the eagle sees its young, weary or fearful, it takes them upon its back, and carries them.” (Cruden.) In allusion to this, it is said of Israel, that God “bare them

on eagle's wings, and brought them unto himself;" * and in our text—"As the eagle spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings." Thus the Lord succors those who would fain mount upward to the skies. A very little experience convinces them of their weakness; they essay to rise, but soon fall; they resolve, but fail; they re-resolve and fail again. But, "He is a very present help: as a mother a fallen child, He raises them up again; as a shepherd, He gathers them in His arms; as an eagle, He bears them on His wings.

You are weak you say: true, and can no more rise to happiness and God, than an unfledged bird can mount to the skies; but what says the Almighty one? "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."†

What more can He say? Why He says, "my strength is made perfect in weakness." And what more? "My grace is sufficient for thee." O! make but trial of His strength, experience will decide how all-sufficient is His might. What God commands, He gives the power to perform. If a man with a withered hand, be commanded to stretch it forth; if a dead body be commanded to arise, the promise and assurance of ability accompanies the command. And if He command you to seek the things which are above, and there be in you a willing mind, it will be as easy as for the eagle to dart through the air. But, if ye will not, then, as the eagle "rejects as unnatural," its young that will not fix their eyes upon the bright orb of day and rise, so God will reject you, and swear "they shall not enter into my rest."

IV. We have the promise of divine *protection*.

When the eagle bears its young on its wings, it is for

* Ex. xix. 4.

† Isa. xli. 10.

protection, no less than aid. The archer must first penetrate the body of the old bird, before he can touch the young. Naturally it is more out of danger than other birds, when in its proper element; security is doubled when on its mother's wings. Every one knows how difficult it is to kill or take an eagle. If he leave his proper sphere; if he come down to earth, and linger at its fountains, or lay his head on its turf; then, he is a noble mark, and an easy prey. Just so the heaven-born soul; if he be in his proper place, following after his proper object, he is, by his very station and calling, guarded against temptation and danger. Wicked men have but little power against him; he moves in another atmosphere. Even the world, with its pomps and vanities tempt him not much; he is above it; and its glittering attractions in the distance, fade on the sight, as fields and flowers, towers, and palaces, and gilded domes, dwindle to a point in the eye of the aeronaut, sailing through the air on his buoyant car.

And even if Satan should shoot at him his fiery dart, it must first penetrate Jehovah's wings before it can touch him. While the eye and wing of the soul are upward, the world, and men of the world, tempt in vain; and while between the wings of the Cherubim, no shaft can penetrate. "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath."* But, if Christians will come down to earth, if they will lay their heads on Deliah's lap, if they subject themselves to the reproof, "what doest thou here?" why then they become like other men, and are as easily snared and taken as they. But, if "their way is above;" if heaven be their destination, and the Most High be taken for their strength and refuge; hell from beneath may rage, but it cannot prevail against them.

* Prov. xv. 24.

Would you be happy? would you have a sure portion? would you be safe? "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Bend your course upward; let your eye, your thoughts, your hearts be in heaven.

Man was made erect—not prone like the worm, to earth. What does this teach him, but, while he walks upon the earth, to look above it? Wings of affection were given to his soul, not to weigh him down; not to dive with, into its caverns of wealth, or to skim its fields of pleasure, but to mount upward. They who are wise, who use their powers aright, "mount up as on eagle's wings."

Again we say, rise, sinner, rise from transitory things. Will you not? Are you saying, in the foolishness of your heart, "I shall die in my nest?" So said Job, when "his root spread out by the waters, and his glory was fresh upon him, and he sat chief, and dwelt as a king;"* and yet, how soon God raised a storm that shook down his nest. And has He not stirred up your nest? it may be that it is already in ruins; and for what? but to teach you that He has provided some better thing; a "mansion in the skies," "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Rise, sinner, rise! and if you will turn a deaf ear to our counsel, remember, "every man's work shall be tried with fire;" and what will you do when your nest is in flames?

"If the righteous scarcely be saved"—with labor, with difficulty—"where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" How can they be saved who labor not? Impossible! When their earthly tabernacle is dissolved, they fall, to rise no more.

Dear hearer! hast thou obeyed the divine admonitions,

* Job. xix. 18, 25.

listened to the divine allurements, and, leaning upon Omnipotence, and trusting to His defence, hast thou learned to mount? Thou hast yet another flight to take; that which thou hast done spiritually, must be done literally. Thou art not always to be on the wings of faith and hope, as on eagles' wings; thou hast to mount on angels' wings. And thy nest must again be shaken; the body is the nest of the soul; and it must be destroyed, ere the soul will, or can, wing its way to the worlds of light.

We see then, why God disturbs with the ills of life, those who have already obeyed His call to look upward. It is that they may obey His second call, and take a second flight. He sends his winds and rain; He makes life uncomfortable; He takes away the warm down of earthly comforts—friends and property perhaps; then He begins to pull down their tabernacles, that they may be willing and glad to leave these nests of death, to dwell in mansions in the skies.

He allures the soul to brighter worlds by brighter views; and because a dark and gloomy region lies between the world and heaven, He leaves not the soul of His turtle-dove to traverse it alone. "I will be with thee"—and He takes the departing spirit on His own Almighty wings, and bears it safely away, to bask forever under the bright beams of an eternal sun, even his own unclouded glory.

So would I die—and I, and I, responds every heart. Have I gained that response? then, die to sin, and live to righteousness; die to the world, and live to heaven; die to self, and live to God: and so shall ye die.

Nay—ye shall never die. The body shall die; the nest of the soul shall be taken down; but the soul shall only depart from earth to heaven, from sorrow to joy, and as it departs, sing

"I meant, I fly—

O, grave! where is thy victory!

O, death! where is thy sting!"

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through
our Lord Jesus Christ."

So may we die.

SERMON VII.

"Who hath despised the day of small things?"—ZECH. iv. 10.

THE words of our text, in their literal sense, refer to the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. The Jews were at that time captives in Babylon, their city was left unto them desolate, their temple was in ruins, and their land, strangers inhabited. But the days of their desolations were accomplished, and the decree went forth from the Sovereign of heaven and earth, that their captivity should be turned as the streams of the south, that their holy city should be restored, and that Jerusalem should again "put on her beautiful garments."

Led on by Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the remnant came again to their own land, and set forward the workmen in the house of the Lord. But it was a little band, and the means were small. They had not King Solomon's exhaustless stores of gold and silver, nor his thousands of cunning workmen; but in troublous times, in a time of weakness, poverty, and oppression, the work began. "And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, many of the Priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house; when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice."* They thought it never could be finished; and

* Ezra iii. 10, 12.

if it should, it would be no way worthy to be called the temple of the Lord. "They despised the day of small things."

But what saith the Lord! do mountainous obstacles obstruct! "Who art thou, O great mountain?"* Are the means trifling and small? "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands also shall finish it."† Are the materials despicable and mean? "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts."‡ "Who hath despised the day of small things?" Let them not be ashamed, let them not be fearful but believing; and in the end they shall exult and rejoice.

With what singular propriety this circumstance might be applied to the Church of God in its various depressions and revivals, must be obvious. We could show you the Church in ruins, in the last days of the Jewish economy; we could recapitulate the decree of heaven for her release and restoration; we could point you to our Zerubbabel, with twelve servants repairing her trenches and renewing her waste places; we could show how the work prospered in their hands, and in the hands of their successors; we could lead you up the Pisgah of prophecy, and there open before your astonished vision, a scene almost too dazzling bright for the eye of the strongest faith. The world a mighty temple; Heaven the most holy place; Jesus the great High Priest; and every human being a Priest or a Levite, sacrificing to, and praising and magnifying the God of the universe.

But we have marked out for ourselves another course. Our text is as strictly applicable to every child of God in his individual capacity, as to the temple at Jerusalem, or to the Universal Church. Believers are the temple of God.

* Zech. iv. 7.

† Zech. iv. 9.

‡ Haggai ii. 9.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"* By nature they are a temple in ruins, and grace itself will never make them in this world, what Adam the first temple was. At best we have but the tables of a broken law; every column of sacred incense is polluted with some noxious vapor; and this earthly house is the den of many unclean thoughts. At best it is with us a "day of small things." How small then must the beginning be! and yet however small, it is not to be lightly esteemed.

It is true both in nature and in grace, that small beginnings often have large endings. Trace yon noble river to its source, you will find its head in some lonely dell, in a spring so small that one might almost cover it with the sole of his foot. And in the work of grace "though the beginning be small, yet the latter end shall greatly increase."† Yet so weak and imbecile is the mind of man, that he is ever prone to despise small things, especially where he ought to anticipate the greatest results—I mean where the work is wholly the Lord's—the work of grace in the heart. To this point I intend to direct my remarks; namely, to encourage the subject of divine grace, though it be with them a day of small things.

Our object is not to show by how small a measure of grace you may just escape the miseries of hell; but to show that the least measure of true grace is effectual to salvation. We design not to satisfy the carnal, but to comfort the feeble. With those who pervert the Scriptures, and wrest them to their own destruction, we profess to have nothing to do. Our business is with those who have a little strength, and yet cannot give the grace of God credit for what it has done

* 1 Cor. iii. 16.

† Job viii. 7.

for them. Nor is it our object to show wherein, or in what attainments of grace a child of God may rest. We would stimulate you, my Christian brethren, from past experience, to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,"* and to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure,"† an assurance which never can be attained by him that doubteth; but to him that believeth, though his faith be but as a grain of mustard seed, all things are possible.

In some sense, the present state is, with all believers, a "day of small things;" for the highest attainments in grace are not to be compared with the least degree of glory. To young Christians, however, those who have not grown much in grace, the phrase and subject will more particularly apply. Grace is not a plant that springs up to perfection in a single night, like Jonah's gourd; but like those things which are more excellent in their nature, it comes gradually to maturity.

First, the seed is cast into the heart by the divine husbandman; this no man knoweth save he who implanted it; presently, through the influence of the sun of righteousness and the dew of the Holy Spirit, the tender blade appears; it grows up, we know not how, until the grain is formed, and amidst conflicting elements, which seem to threaten it with blasting and destruction, it gradually ripens for the harvest, and then is gathered into the heavenly garner.

But to adhere more strictly to the figure in the text. The work of grace in the heart, is like the building of a magnificent temple for the Lord of Hosts.

First the corner-stone is laid, then the superstructure is reared, then "the top-stone is brought off with shoutings of grace, grace unto it." By the *foundation*, I understand, the

* Phil. iii. 14.

† 2 Peter i. 10.

beginning of the work of grace, or "the day of small things;" and that is when the sinner is made sensible of his sin and misery, but sees not how he can escape from them; when he desires an interest in Christ, but fears to claim it; when he loves and longs after the ordinances, but dares not use them; or cannot draw that comfort and advantage from them, which he desires, and feels he needs; when he esteems it not merely his duty but his privilege to pray, yet cannot utter one word before God, or, if he does, it is with trembling and with fear. In short, it is "the day of small things," when the experience of the soul is made up of desires and disappointments, of efforts and failures, of remorse and sin; "when to will is present with him; but how to perform that which is good, he finds not."* Yes, this is the period in our spiritual life, which we and our enemies are liable to despise. *We* shed over it the bitter tears of grief, *they* mock and deride at our state; *we* think it will come to naught; *they* sarcastically and disdainfully say, "what do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves; will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall."†

Thus they speak contemptuously of the righteous whom the Lord loveth. But it is a state of things that ought not thus to be regarded either by them or by us. They shall know "It is the Lord's doings, and it shall be marvellous in our eyes."

It is like the day when light first broke upon chaos. True, it disclosed nothing but discord, disorder and confusion, yet it was really and truly a day—the beginning of all other days, the precursor of that which saw the mon-

* Rom. ix. 18.

† Neh. iv. 2, 3.

arch of the starry host commence his race, like a giant, through the skies.

It is a state of things which ought not to be despised, because *God our Father* does not despise it. It is his own work—the first beams of grace in the soul, created by Him who commanded the light to shine out of darkness—and He pronounces it “*very good*.”

The *Lord Jesus Christ* does not despise it. “The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench.” The *Holy Spirit* does not despise it. The groanings which cannot be uttered, are generated by His influence, and He approves, and will answer the energetic cry. The great *Triune God* delights in His children in their lowest state. “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another : and the Lord hearkened and heard it,” says Malachi. He heard them speaking of His grace, and the great things he had done for them, and He commands the recording angel to write it down in the book of remembrance ; and it shall be proclaimed to their honor, that they delighted in the Lord their God. “And I will spare them,” says He, “as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”*

But those poor souls who are too timid to *speak* of the grace of God in them, who only *think* upon His perfections, providence and grace, what notice is taken of them ? Put them down too. It is a “day of small things” with them ; but I have searched their hearts, and have known their thoughts, and they are right in my sight, and they shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels.”

May we despise that which is so highly esteemed of God ? O no ! ye of little faith, despise it not : it is the

* Mal. iii. 16, 17.

pearl of great price. Despise it not ; it is an immortal germ pregnant with all the beauty and richness of a future harvest. Depise it not ; it is the foundation of that spiritual edifice which will in the end be more glorious than man in his pristine perfection. Despise it not ; your condition has been the condition of every saint.

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."* Grace opens upon the soul by degrees ; first a pale gleam breaks in upon the mind ; a moment more, and those objects that were scarcely perceptible, appear in their distinct forms ; a little longer, and the broad blaze of the noontide sun dispels every vestige of darkness from the mind.

There are in Christ little children, as well as young men and fathers. The greatest giant of a saint that ever fought under the banner of the cross, was once a babe, a lamb borne in the shepherd's arms.

Take, my brethren, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles—those Samsons in grace ; with every one you find a "day of small things ;" yea, in that very virtue in which they were pre-eminent. *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, distrusts God's promise and is afraid of his life in Pharaoh's court. *Moses*, the meekest of men, is angry with the people and smites the rock twice. *David*, the "man after God's own heart," puts away his fear from before his face. The *disciples*, with one consent cry, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"* It was a "day of small things" with them, but finally grace triumphed and brought them off "more than conquerors." They were then the children of God, when they were like the dove, trembling and defenceless ; and like the vine, unable to send their boughs aloft ; and like the lamb, silly and wandering. But in the end you see them "mount

* Mark iv. 38.

up with wings as eagles," and shooting forth their branches like Lebanon, and putting on the strength and courage of the lion.

Therefore, my brethren, until you find in the kingdom of nature, infancy with the strength and vigor of manhood; and in the kingdom of God, grace perfect and without any alloy, despond not. We may mourn that our grace is not stronger, but we ought to rejoice that we have any at all.

But lastly, "despise not the day of small things," for all the blessings which thou desirest are promised to the *least measure of true grace*. God requires *true* grace, not any specific measure. All have not faith equally strong; all are not Abraham's or David's or Paul's—it would be a blessing if they were; but all the children of God have faith equally precious, and their names are as certainly registered in heaven. How glimmering was the faith of the disciples, when Christ told them to "rejoice because their names were written in heaven!"

"The weakest believer," says one, "if his faith purifies his heart and works by love, is as nearly related to God as the strongest; just as the weakest and most helpless child in the family, is as much the father's child as the strongest and stoutest."

The weakest grace gives a deadly wound to sin, and as certain, though not so highly comfortable, an assurance of an entrance among the saints in light, as a stronger grace. Seek not then your *torment*, where you should find your *comfort*.

If any inquire, what is the lowest standard of grace in the heart? I should answer, *desire*—a desire for the blessings of the Gospel and the favor of God; and we scruple not to say, that those blessings, and that favor, belong to a measure of grace as small as a desire. For as a single

spark is fire, as well as the whole element, so is a true desire grace, as well as the full assurance of faith and hope.

We are aware that many will say that they have a desire for grace, who never sent a single devout aspiration to heaven for the blessed boon. Such desire is like the brilliancy of the glow-worm; it shines only in the dark night of adversity; in prosperity, it is all merged in the splendor and delight of earthly bliss.

Genuine desire is enkindled in the soul, by a live coal from the altar of God; and though it may not always blaze, it ever glows, though at times it be but with the vigor and warmth of smoking flax. This is its character—a desire for holiness, a desire for mercy, a desire, which would rather hear of mercy and holiness, than of the possession of a kingdom. It is the desire of a broken and contrite heart. This is the least measure of grace that is intelligible to man; and to this measure all possible blessings belong.

The blessings promised to the penitent, begin with the beginning of conversion. Thus David resolved upon an ingenuous confession of his sin, and immediately God gave him the comfort of pardon in his conscience; “I said I will confess my transgression;” he did but say that he would do it, and mark the consequences: “Thou forgavest,”—immediately—“forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” Thus in the character of the father of the prodigal, God represents himself as not waiting till the sinner throws himself upon his bosom, but while he is yet a great way off, He runs to meet him, and falls upon his neck, and with a father’s embrace seals a father’s love. Thus the promise runs; “Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”*

* Isaiah lxx. 24.

The blessings of pardon, peace and reconciliation, are indeed connected with repentance and faith ; but if we only desire repentance and faith, we are not altogether without them.

Desire is the pulse of the soul ; and however low, however agitated, however feebly it may beat, it proves that life is there. The desire of grace, is a pledge from God that He will give it. The desire of the Spirit, cannot be but from the Spirit ; and we know that "He will perfect that which He has begun." He will satisfy the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which He has himself created.

Wherefore, my brethren of little faith, "despise not the day of small things." Let the grace of God have full credit for that which it has done *in* you and *for* you.

We know that many may turn our subject to their own hurt, crying, "peace, peace, when there is no peace."* But encouragement is not to be withheld from the lambs of Christ's flock, because the bold and presumptuous sinner, or the specious hypocrite, abuses the grace of God.

To guard however against so fatal a mistake, we shall add a word of caution, by pointing out briefly what we consider to be the prominent features of true grace, even in its lowest degree ; for we would not for the world, that they should have one spark of comfort, for whom it was never designed.

We remark then, that where there is the least work of the Spirit, the foundation is always laid in deep humility and contrition. The man is made sensible of his sin and misery ; he sees that there is no help in himself ; with restless desire he longs for another to bring him succor ; he looks

* Jeremiah vi. 14.

at Christ and his salvation, and he esteems them above all earthly things, although he dares not apply them to himself. All he is able, all he dares to do, is to long for the joys of his salvation. But then, it is the intense, the longing desire of a drowning man for life, the famishing man for food; and he watches for them, more than they that watch for the morning. This is the *desire that is grace*.

My hearer! does thy heart respond, "that is my case?" Art thou humbled with shame and confusion of face? Are thy sins and thy sinful nature thy greatest grief? Is the bent of thy soul toward God, and holiness, and heaven? Dost thou desire them so as to seek after them? Then take all the comfort our subject is calculated to afford. Remember always, that "the day of small things," is the day of God's grace; "an immortal seed cast into an immortal soil," that will in the end bring forth fruit to eternal glory.

But is there another hearer, the language of whose heart is, "I never was, and I see not why I should be, covered with shame and confusion. As to the Lord Jesus Christ, of course I love him, and have no doubt that he is my Saviour. As to holiness, certainly I desire to be holy; I am not such a reprobate as to despise holiness, to be sure I do not pretend to be an eminent saint, but I am glad to find that the day of small things is not to be despised, and so I hope all will be well at last." Ah! my hearer, this is not the language of a broken-hearted sinner; at your peril take one crumb of comfort from the children's table. He who takes to himself comfort which does not belong to him, only treasures up "wrath against the day of wrath."

Go ye, and learn from the degraded, wretched, helpless, guilty state of the Jews in their captivity, how wretched your condition is. Break the chains of your captivity; return to the liberty of the children of God; and then take

encouragement from our text and subject. One might as well expect the Jews in Babylon, to serve in building the temple at Jerusalem, as a bond-slave of sin and Satan to build to the Lord our God.

Flee then sinner, flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his own soul. But if ye will not flee, the day of vengeance will come, and God will recompense to every man according to his folly, and make him drink the cup of his fury.

But we must, in conclusion, address one word more to those who have just escaped the confines of Satan's dark domain, and are returning to the Lord their God. You have a work before you which demands your most active exertions. While our subject contains strong consolation, it loudly calls you on to duty. Every doctrine, every promise, as well as every direct precept, contains a practical admonition. They say, "Go on to fulfil all righteousness." So the Jews understood our text to be a call to build, and Ezra bears honorable testimony to their obedience. See brethren that you are diligent to build up yourselves in your most holy faith; until the whole "building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."*

This spiritual temple of which we speak, is not an ærial castle, the creature of a vain imagination, raised by a thought, existing only in the fantasy of the mind. No, it has an existence more real than anything you can see or touch; and when this world is burned up, and all its gorgeous palaces and cloud-capt towers, are prostrate in the dust, it shall continue, and be the dwelling of Him who sitteth upon the throne, when "time shall be no more."

Let the Lord Jesus Christ be your foundation. Build according to the pattern shown you in God's holy word. Let

* Ephesians ii. 21.

faith, Christian faith, be placed upon the corner-stone ; and then, "giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity."*

Rest not in apparent conversion. He who is content with small attainments in grace, has no grace at all. But in dependence on the promises of God, cleanse yourselves and perfect holiness in the fear of God. You may have to encounter many trials and difficulties. The wiles of the devil, the allurements of the world, the frowns of friends, and the sad remains of inbred corruption, will ever be counteracting your noblest efforts. But be not afraid ; while they conspire together to hinder the work, like the enemies of Israel, do you, like Nehemiah, pray unto God and set a watch by day and by night. *Reading, Meditation, and Prayer* are noble instruments to help on the good work of grace in the heart ; but ever look from them to the Lord Jesus Christ our great Zerubbabel. Commit yourselves to Him ; nothing is too hard for Him. He will make every mountain a plain, and every crooked thing straight, and you shall know the truth of the declaration, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house ; his hands shall also finish it."†

* 2 Peter i. 5-7.

† Zech. iv. 9.

SERMON VIII.

And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place ; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."—ISAIAH XXXII. 2.

What a change has sin wrought in the condition and prospects of man ! Before the transgression, man was but a little lower than the angels, the world was a paradise, every returning day brought a heaven of joy, with a pledge that to-morrow should be as this day, and yet more abundant ; then the whole creation was in happy unison to cheer creation's chief. But oh ! how changed the scene : the very elements wage war with man, the winds carry pestilence on their invisible pinions, the clouds pour forth destructive torrents, the sun beats with fiery fierceness on the culprit's head, the stars in their courses fight against him ; and all this is but a faint emblem of his moral condition and curse. Could our venerable progenitor have seen with omniscient ken, all the sad consequences of sin ; could he, from some high eminence, have looked through the long vista of time, and seen generation succeed generation with mourning, lamentation, and woe, written on every brow ; could he have seen his numerous progeny like so many travellers passing through the journey of life, traversing a dry and thirsty land, exposed to wind, to tempest, to scorch-

ing suns, and parching thirst; how would his manly soul have stood appalled? And could he have stretched his vision into the wide wastes of an unblest eternity, and witnessed there the effects of sin; how would he have sighed to surrender back his soul and body to their original nonentity! Now this is the condition to which sin reduces us. Read the whole history of man in its many leaved volume, and you find not one fair page; there is literally nothing but a regular alternation of crimson guilt, and black woe. But could he again have seen here a refuge, and there a covert, and yonder an overshadowing rock; and by all the way a cooling stream; that is, could he have seen a Saviour from sin and its curse, methinks he would, with glowing heart, and ready tongue, exclaim, "I'll live and be blessed, and be the blessed father of a happy race."

Such is the condition in which grace places us. The revelation of God's grace is a volume, where every page is fair, every sentence peace, and every line mercy. If it speak of ought beside, it is only as a beacon to guard us against impending danger; or, in contrast, to display superior goodness; witness our text. Here is the wind and the tempest; the hiding place and the covert; who need fear the one when the other is so nigh? I need scarcely tell you that he who is all this, is the Man Christ Jesus, and we propose to preach Christ under this imagery.

I. The Lord Jesus Christ is a retreat from the wind, and a refuge from the tempest. A distinction might perhaps here be drawn between wind and tempest, but we consider them as being so nearly synonymous, that we shall take the liberty of blending them together; the one probably signifies a greater, the other a less degree of the same thing. Or perhaps one may refer to the present, the other

to the future consequences of sin, from both which Christ is a covert and a shield.

These figures especially express the wrath of God. "They that plough iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same; (says Eliphaz,) by the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed." "Terrors are upon me, (says Job,) they pursue my soul as the wind." "Thou shalt fan them, (says God to his Church, concerning her enemies,) and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them."* When his wrath rises to the highest pitch, and is poured forth in all its fury, it is then called a tempest. "Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place."† "Upon the wicked the Lord shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup."‡ See your danger sinners; sinners we say, whether your sins be many or few, small or great; whether they be the follies of youth, or the frailties of age. Against every one a sentence of destruction is gone from God, and oh! who can stand before Him. Men may fancy themselves strong as a mountain, but they are as chaff before the whirlwind of His wrath.

Think not of this wrath according to the storms with which we are familiar, but think of the wind that rent the mountains, and brake the rocks asunder before Elijah. Think of the tempest that desolated the land of Egypt. Think of the storm that wrecked the world and sunk her wretched crew into the depths of eternal misery. Think thus, and you have some conception how fearful a thing it is to fall under the tempest of God's wrath. And know, and remember that it is neither slow, nor distant, nor uncertain; it comes swiftly

* Isa. xli. 16. † Job xxvii. 20, 21. ‡ Psalm xi. 6.

like the wind, suddenly like the whirl-wind, certainly as the flood. Already the clouds are gathering and blackening, and soon will burst on the guilty soul. No sooner does man commence his journey down the little hill of time, but lo ! a little cloud like a man's hand arises in the distant horizon, it grows with his growth, and expands with his age, and blackens with his crimes ; ever and anon it shoots forth its fiery darts, and pours down its sulphureous streams in the common calamities of life ; a certain precursor of the storm which is about to descend upon the sinner.

Where, where then, oh ! sinner wilt thou seek a hiding-place ? Wilt thou take refuge behind thine own bulwarks ? "As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence." Wilt thou repose in thy virtue ? thy own virtue is but an ark of rushes, unable to outride the storm. Seek it, where alone it is to be found ; in the man Christ Jesus ; He alone can shelter thee from the rage of the world, the force of temptation, and the wrath of God. All beside are refuges of lies, devised in folly, executed in madness ; and when the deluded mortal, like the proud Assyrian, boasts of the great Babylon which he has built, the destroying angel comes, laughs at the vain fabric, sweeps away the refuge and the refugee and leaves not a wreck behind.

But Christ affords complete protection. Do you ask how ? As the wall intercepts the wind, and the hiding-place receives the full force of the storm. For us he became a man of sorrows, and drank the bitter cup of His father's wrath ; for us He was tempted, and blunted the shafts of Satan's devices ; for us He received the contents of the seven vials ; and now, His name, His person and work, is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.

Only take refuge by faith in the righteousness of Christ, that is, His whole obedience to the moral law ; and in His

atonement, that is, the whole series of his sufferings, and you will find yourselves behind a wall of adamant which no wind can shake ; and in a covert which no storm can penetrate ; you will find then, the clouds you so much dread

“ Are big with blessings, and shall break
In blessings on your head.”

II. The Lord Jesus Christ is held out to us under the idea of rivers in a dry place.

This world is called a wilderness in allusion to that through which the Israelites passed to Canaan, and like that it reaches from the house of our bondage to the promised land. If we look at the description given of the former, we shall find that it corresponds precisely with the latter. Moses calls that “ a great and terrible wilderness, wherein were scorpions, and drought, and where was no water.”* Hosea “ a land of great drought,”† and Jeremiah “ a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought and of the shadow of death.”‡ These circumstances, and especially the want of water, account for the frequent murmurings of the Israelites ; hungry and thirsty their souls fainted within them. Such is the world, and such our characters. It is natural for men to thirst, and it is natural to seek after something that will satisfy. There is a principle in man which ever cries “ give, give.” The evil lies not here, but in applying to those creature enjoyments which can never satisfy ; there the evil lies, “ they forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” They go to pits that have no water. Some worldly object looks in distant prospect like a deceitful morass, it presents the appearance of a pellucid lake, they hasten towards it, but alas ! as Jeremiah expresses it “ They are waters that

* Deut. viii. 15.

† Hosea xiii. 5.

‡ Jer. ii. 6.

fail," that are not sure ; they have the appearance, but not the reality. And if perchance they find, like the tribes of Israel, a well by the way, it is marah ; sin has rendered it so bitter that they cannot drink, or so brackish that it rather increases than diminishes thirst. So then their very drink is death to their enjoyment here, and soon they will thirst never to drink again ; no, not a drop of water will cool their parched tongues, and perhaps their torment increased by the view of the river of the water of life proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb.

Imagine, my dear hearers, an individual situated as we have described, in a wretched land without water ; for very thirst in the agonies of death ; whom think you would he esteem his best friend ? the man who would offer to lead him to the pinnacle of honor, or show him the road to wealth, or conduct him to the gay fields of pleasure ? or the man who would bring him a cup of cold water, and would lead him to a land of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills ? My hearers, this world is that wretched land, and thou art the traveller ; Satan offers you the former, Christ the latter. In the wilderness there is a rock, and that rock is Christ ; it is a smitten rock, smitten for us in mercy by the hand of justice, and from that smitten rock flow waters, "rivers of waters of life." It is the river in a dry place. He is the river which makes glad the city of our God. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The watchman on the distant hills caught the sound, and echoed, and re-echoed it, from land to land, and from age to age, until it reached our land, and age, and ears ; and now by the voice of his ministers, he cries still, "Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Come then, ye thirsty pilgrims and drink ; they

are living waters, waters of gladness, satisfying waters ; drink abundantly, the river is ever full. "The world is a pond whose waters soon run out, but Christ is a spring whose streams are perennial."

Depend upon it, my hearers, none but Christ and his salvation can satisfy your souls. Consolation, joy, peace, pleasantness, are found only in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Act like Moses when commanded to strike the rock ; reason not upon the improbability of the case ; say not that religion is a dry repulsive thing ; but like him believe, like him obey. Come with joy, draw water out of the wells of salvation, and prove for yourselves the truth of the declaration, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Go not to the artificial reservoirs of man's inventions, but go to the river of God. "Whoso drinketh of those waters shall thirst again ;" they may seem to satisfy, but take the cup from the lips, and they are still parched, "but whoso drinketh of these waters shall never thirst ;" never desire again to return to the beggarly elements of the world, never have a desire unsatisfied. The waters of divine consolation ever meander at the Christian's feet, yea, they are in him "a well of water springing up to everlasting life." There are principles and affections formed in the believer's heart which yield delight the world can neither give nor take away ; delight that abides with him at all times, and under all circumstances, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, at home and abroad, in life and in death, in time and in eternity. Tell us, ye who drink at the world's cisterns, can they boast of aught like this ? Ask the sick, ask the afflicted, ask the dying, ask Dives ; and they will tell you,

"That you may as well expect meridian light
From shades of black mouthed night,
As in this empty world to find a full delight."

III. The Lord Jesus Christ is set forth under the idea of an overshadowing rock. The incarnate Son of God is often called a rock ; at one time to intimate that He is our only foundation on which to build our hopes of eternal life ; at another as a basis for the feet, in opposition to the miry clay ; at a third, as a strength to the needy in his distress ; and here, as a shadow to the weary sun-stricken traveller. Sometimes he is compared to the shadow of a tree, "as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."* Again, to a canopy of clouds : "Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest : "† as the pillar of cloud hung upon Israel's camp.

But, in our text he is compared to an overshadowing rock, which can neither be dispersed by the wind, like a cloud, nor penetrated by the sun, like a tree. To travellers in a hot and sultry clime, scarce any thing can afford such delight as to find a great rock, as most perfectly excluding the rays of the sun, and imparting a natural coolness. Such a land is the world, and such a rock is Christ. Out of Christ, man is ever exposed to the unbroken face of adversity's rays, or to temptation's malignant beams, or to the less dreaded, but no less fatal, gleams of prosperity. The Christian may be in any of these conditions, but he is safe ; he may be in adversity, but there is one with him like the Son of God, and he walks in the fire, and is not consumed ; he may be in temptation, but there is a shield about him which no shaft can pierce, he may be in the still more pestiferous atmosphere of prosperity, but there is an

* Sol. Song, ii. 2.

† Isa. xviii. 4.

influence around him which preserves his heart and conversation pure ; so, "he is not afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday, a thousand shall fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand, but it shall not come nigh him. Because he has made the Lord his refuge, and the Most High his habitation. He dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty."*

Pilgrim, art thou weary of the world's cares, and Satan's devices, and thine own sins ! get thee to this rock, it is the only salubrious, serene, and quiet region in the whole universe. "Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. Deut. xxxii. 31.

They must, and at times will acknowledge, that the righteous are the only secure, the only happy people ; and in the day when every hill shall flee away, except the hill which God has made, then will they cry "the fools thought their lives madness, but we now find that such were our own, and their's the way of wisdom."

To take shelter under the rock Christ Jesus, is to repose on the power of God, to confide in the truth of God, and to seek refreshment from the word and ordinances of God. He who thus takes shelter in Christ, expects, by the power of God, and not by the might of his own arm, to obtain deliverance from all his enemies, sorrows, and sins ; from death and the grave ; from pollution and eternal woe ; and by the truth of God he is assured that all this shall be accomplished. On the power and "truth of God he reposes with perfect safety, with a hope that can never make him ashamed, with a faith which cannot be broken down. Under the shadow of this great rock he sits with unspeak-

* Ps. xci.

able delight, and sees all the "exceeding great and precious promises" advancing to a regular, constant and certain fulfilment, throughout the progress of never-ending being." But his enjoyments consist not merely in anticipations; he has present realities. After six days exposure to storms and heat and drought, on the seventh he sits with delight under the shadow of God's word and ordinances, and finds himself abundantly and sweetly refreshed with the droppings of the sanctuary. No chased, stricken deer pants more earnestly for the cooling stream, than the thirsty soul for the spiritual consolations of God's house. "My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?"* "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."†

Many, my dear hearers, can attest the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ in all these respects: nor shall any who seek him, seek in vain, or be disappointed of their hopes. Have you had recourse to this refuge from the storm and tempest? Perhaps you think you have; I trust it may be so; but mistake is possible, and it is dangerous; let us therefore test the point. Have you ever felt that, by reason of sin, you are justly exposed to ruin; and that, out of Christ, there is no possibility of escape? If you have never been convinced of the truth, you are like those Egyptians, who regarded not the threatenings of God concerning the plague of hail, and through their infidelity, sought no refuge, and perished in the field. Have you been convinced by the word and your own experience, that the world and the things that are in the world are unsatisfying; and, in consequence of this conviction, have you renounced the world and its vanities, its pomps and its pleasures, and drawn your consolations from a heavenly source? If you have

* Ps. xlii. 2.

† Ps. lxxxiv. 2.

not learned the entire vanity of every thing but Christ, and His infinite sufficiency, you "have not seen Him, neither known him:" you have not begun to drink in endless pleasures from the rivers of his grace.

Have you never felt under sin, temptation, adversity, yea, even under prosperity, like one under a melting firmament, ready to die for some retreat, some cooling stream, some refreshing shade? Have you never desired to find that place where you might cast off your burden, escape the power of sin, and avoid the force of allurements? And have you not learned that relief cannot be found in all the world beside, except under the shadow of an eternal rock? I dare not flatter you; if you have not, you are strangers to Christ.

But, if you feel your guilt, your want, your danger, then let me exhort you to come to Christ by prayer and faith. He who would be safe must take shelter under the covert of His righteousness, and he who would be happy must draw comforts from His spirit, and walk under the shadow of His providence. Do you ask whether you have a sufficient warrant to come to Christ? The Father says, "Turn ye to the strong hold:" the Son—"Look unto me and be ye saved:" the Spirit—"Whosoever will, let him come." These exhortations are not grounded upon your worthiness, but upon your necessity and willingness. Let him that is guilty come. Let him that is athirst come. Let him that is weary and heavy laden come. And, in short, so must it be in every case, "whosoever will" let him retreat behind the cross; "let him drink of the waters of life freely;" let him hide himself in the clefts of the rock, "until the indignation be overpast: for, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity."*

* Is xxvi. 20. 21.

Do you still question whether any does pity or can relieve? Christ pities, for He is a man "touched with the feeling of our infirmities:" and He can relieve, for He is "God over all, blessed forever more." He is called a man, though not a mere man; for He is the "King who reigns in righteousness;" "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." Neither is he mere divinity; for He assumed our nature, and by this assumption became every way competent to be our "hiding-place from the wind, and our covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." How a mere man can be all this, it is impossible to conceive. How a God can who is a "consuming fire," is equally unintelligible: but "God manifest in the flesh," at once commends Himself to our understandings, our affections, our faith. A Saviour, such as we needed, must be God and man; a sufferer and a conqueror; a victim and the bringer-in of everlasting righteousness. Such an one is God in Christ, if there be any honesty, any truth in the testimony of Scripture concerning Him. Let Him have our gratitude, our love, our faith: let us give Him our confidence, our hearts, our all; and He will give us salvation from the love, and power, and curse of sin; He will be our refuge in trouble, our river in a dry and thirsty land, and our rock under the sun's smiting rays. No evil bodily or spiritual, in time or eternity, shall come nigh to hurt them that trust in Him who is God over all, blessed forever more,

SERMON IX.

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."
—ISAIAH, l. 10.

When a sinner "puts off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and is renewed in the spirit of his mind,"* then he is advanced to a dignity, and made partaker of enjoyments, unknown before. He is made a son of God, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

The exceeding great and precious privileges of God's people are expressed under a variety of figures in the Sacred Scriptures, and especially those which relate to their sensible enjoyments. Sometimes they are compared to "living water," "heavenly food," a "pleasant path." But perhaps no figure is more common than that of *light*. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."† "Thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."‡ "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear."||

As light conveys to our minds the idea of something unspeakably sweet and pleasant, so it intimates that these enjoyments are uncertain. There are indeed blessings con-

* Eph. iv. 22. † Eph. v. 8. ‡ Isa. lx. 1. || Psalm xxvii. 1.

nected with our Lord Jesus Christ which are perfect and indefeasible—as justification and adoption: but those which are inherent—as love, joy, peace, and the smiles of God's countenance—are ever variable and changing. These keep pace with our sanctification; that, being imperfect, they are, of course, liable to constant waxings and wanings.

All Christians are not equally happy—none are always so. Some mount up as on eagles' wings, towards heaven their native place—others are so feeble and faint, that they can scarce stretch up a single thought towards God. Some are strong in the full assurance of faith and hope—others are like a bruised reed. Some are “exceeding glad” all the day long, through “the light of God's countenance”—others “walk in darkness, and have no light.”

To the latter class, our subject will be addressed; and, if any of my hearers are “sitting under the dark mantle of a sad and tedious night,” we pray God, that the present voice may usher in the golden chariots of a glorious morning to their souls, which, “like the shining light, shall shine more and more unto the perfect day.”

We shall follow the order marked out in our text, and first point out the *characters* intended—then, their *condition*—and then give some *suitable directions*.

I. We are to notice the *character* addressed in our text. It is evident that a particular class of those who are in darkness, are here intended—those who *fear* and *obey* God. Those who fear and obey Him not, are in darkness; but it is far different from the former. They are in the darkness of nature; in a state of mind similar to the unformed world, when darkness lay upon the face of the deep; those are in the shade of an eclipse—a transient obscuration of the Sun of Righteousness. God addresses the former in a

manner far different from the latter—in the language of alarm and terror. “Arise! awake!” “why slumberest thou?” “Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead!” To the latter He speaks in the voice of tenderness and love. He seems to “gather them in his arms,” and, in the still, small voice of love, to whisper in their ears, “wherefore do ye doubt? Be not afraid, O ye of little faith!” “Trust in the Lord and stay upon thy God;” and, though darkness “may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.”

1st. It is the character of the people of God, that, though in darkness, “they *fear the Lord*.” Not as a slave fears his master—but as a son his father. Not as fallen spirits fear God, and tremble before his glory, yet hate his blessed character—but as angels, who, while they fear, reverence and adore.

This fear is grounded upon a firm belief of the *purity* of God, that forbids Him to regard sin with toleration, much less with the slightest degree of complacency; and of His *justice*, that forbids Him to permit unatoned sin to go unpunished; and of His *wrath*, bitter as wormwood, terrible as an army with banners, hot as Tophet kindled with the breath of God. It is grounded likewise on a right apprehension of His *love*, a pearl of greater price than life itself. “All that a man hath will he give for his life;” but for this, he will give all and life beside, for he feels that “the loving-kindness of Jehovah is better than life”—better than long life—better than life at its best estate—better than long life and prosperity all our days.

This fear springs from a reverential esteem for the majesty of God, a dread of His displeasure, a desire of His favor, blended with supreme love for His immaculate character, His infinite perfections, and sovereign goodness. This is a genuine fear of God. From this fear of God,

springs a desire to please Him in all things. Such a disposition of heart, produces a corresponding course in the life; hence, the character in our text is next described as
2d. "*Obedying the voice of his servant.*"

By "His servant" is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."* By "the voice of His servant," is meant, the whole revelation of His will in the Law and Gospel; or, the requisitions which God, as our *Sovereign*, lays upon us in the covenant of works, and as our *Saviour*, under the covenant of grace; and embraces *repentance, faith, and holiness.*

He preached *repentance.* "Repent ye and believe the Gospel."† "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."‡ To this voice, the character now addressed, is obedient. A view of sin as committed against a God of matchless purity, inflexible justice, and resistless power—against a God whose favor is life eternal, and whose displeasure is a flaming fire, and "everlasting destruction from the glory of His power"—against a God who has been his chief benefactor and friend. Such a view of sin, breaks his heart into penitence, extracts the tear of godly sorrow from his eye, and generates a holy indignation against sin in his heart.

Christ preached the necessity of *faith.* "He that believeth shall be saved." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom He hath sent."|| The character we are considering, has heard the testimony that God has given concerning His Son; that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."§

* Phil. ii. 6, 7.

† Mark i. 15.

‡ Luke xiii. 3.

|| John vi. 29.

§ Acts iv. 12.

He has learned the way of salvation by faith ; he is willing to accept of salvation in this way ; accordingly, he renders the obedience of faith. In other words he trusts, confides, depends on Christ for salvation. He commits his soul into His hands to be saved by Him in His own appointed way, " by grace alone, through faith."

Christ preached the necessity of *holiness*. " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." The renovated soul hears this command, and is willing, and sincerely endeavours, to obey it in all its length and breadth. It is true he is not absolutely free from sin, but he has an absolute hatred of it ; he is not *perfect* in obedience, but he labors uniformly and universally to obey all the divine commands.

Indeed it is perhaps to this particular point that our text has the most direct reference, because it is that which most obviously distinguishes the character of God's people ; it is that which bears testimony to every other branch of the work of grace in the soul of man.

In proportion to the depth of humility, and the height of faith, and the luxuriance of love, so will be the perfection of holiness and the abundance of good works.

And, let it ever be remembered, that no man has any solid pretensions to true religion, who loves not in deed and in truth. He not only says to the naked and destitute, " Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed," but he clothes and feeds them. He not only says, " Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," but he forgives as freely as he hopes to be forgiven. He not only prays, " Thy kingdom come," but he labors by actual exertion, and by willing contributions, to extend that kingdom. Cost him what self-denial it may, in acts of frugality, in the mortification of pride, in subduing indolence that he may do his

master's work, the sacrifice is cheerfully made. He has learned how to deny himself for the sake of following Christ. Nothing so much establishes the sincerity of our profession as self-denial.

The mortification of darling appetites, passions and inclinations, in obedience to the will of God, will pass for more at His bar, than the sacrifice of ten thousand rams, or the offering of a thousand rivers of oil.

A man may say "Lord, Lord;" he may profess the name and cause of Christ; he may read the Scriptures, attend public and social worship; he may talk much of doctrines and duties, promises and privileges; he may "eat and drink in Christ's name"; he may take the sacred symbols of His body and blood; he may do "many wonderful works"; may feed the poor, work miracles, and speak with tongues; he may "prophecy"; he may preach the Gospel during a long life; and yet practice no self-denial, and so be none of Christ's. But, "whosoever takes up his cross and follows Christ,"—he is His disciple,—he is the character addressed in the text. This is the obedience which Christ pre-eminently requires, and we have insisted the more upon it, because it is the very point in which professed Christians are most deficient.

Having thus defined the *character*, we now proceed

II. To notice the *condition* in which he is supposed to be "walking in darkness and having no light."

God's people, favorites of heaven, children of light, may be surrounded with thick darkness for a time. Not with the darkness of nature, but with the darkness of an exercised soul—in a distressed, comfortless state of mind. They may be assaulted with the darts of Satan. Their sins may stand in dread array before them, and not the least expression of divine love be given to their souls. They may have no light—no sense of God's love—no token of divine favor.

They may be utterly destitute of comfort, without the faintest glimmering of the light of joy and peace,—entirely deprived of the “witness of the spirit.” “They may have no lively influence of divine power, raising the mind to the contemplation of God, and to communion with Him”—and yet, not be destitute of the *light of grace*.

The experience of all God’s people, in every age, proves this fact. Thus *Job*—“Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?”* “Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he holdeth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.”† And *David*—“As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they daily say unto me, Where is thy God.”‡

Paul was a chosen vessel, and grace had taken up its abode in his heart, when the scales on his eyes were only a figure of the darkness within; and when, on another occasion, he exclaimed “O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”||

Peter speaks of those whom he addresses as “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” and blesses God for the “abundant mercy” bestowed on them; and yet, for a season, they might be “in heaviness through manifold temptations.” Yea, he adds, there is a “needs be” for it; “that the trial of their faith”—their trust and staying upon God—“might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”§

* Job xiii. 24.

† Job xxiii. 8. 9.

‡ Psalm xlii. 1—3.

|| Romans vii. 24.

§ 1 Pet. ii. 2, 6, 7.

Thus the spouse in Solomon's song—the representation of the Church of God on earth—mourns after her departed husband, which is Christ. “Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” Even the blessed Saviour himself, entered the kingdom through the darkness of temptation; anguish of body and mind; under the hidings of his Father's face. “My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” And every child of God, may, at one time or other, adopt the lines of a truly spiritual poet——

“My sun is hid—my comforts lost;
My graces droop—my sins revive;
Distressed, dismayed, and tempest-tossed,
My soul is only just alive.”

But why do we labor to prove that, which is as well known to all who fear and obey God, as the regular alternations of night and day, summer and winter? If any of my hearers are ignorant on this subject, and to the natural man it is senseless jargon, it is proof that they have not taken the first step in the divine life. There is no real apprehension of this spiritual subject, except as we know something of God and the light of His countenance. Nor is this to be confounded with our outward circumstances. We may be in the greatest possible worldly prosperity, and yet, in spiritual darkness; and, on the other hand, we may be in the deepest adversity,—poverty and want may come like “an armed man;” sickness may emaciate our frames; reproach and contumely may be poured upon us; “deep may call upon deep;” “waves and billows may go over us”—and yet, “the candle of the Lord may shine upon us.” David was in the climax of prosperity, when in the depth of spiritual desertion. St. Paul was a prisoner of the Lord, ready to be offered a martyr to the cause of Jesus, when he

exclaimed—"I know whom I have believed."* "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."†

Seeing then, that the children of God may be in such varied circumstances, we remark, that their state is not to be determined by their frames and feelings—their enjoyments or sufferings—their light or darkness.

Assurance and joy are not *essential* to faith; nor, on the contrary, do doubt and sorrow prove that faith does not exist. It is then improper language which we sometimes hear—"I know that my sins are forgiven, that I am renewed and sanctified, because I am so happy."

Happy feelings may proceed from a vast variety of causes that have no connexion with the work of grace. Individuals who have but an imperfect, or partial view of the character of God, the malignity of sin, and the nature of the law, may be urged to rejoice until they are wrought up to the highest pitch of apparent ecstasy, while they can give no other "reason for the hope that is in them," than, that they feel so happy! You may sing the songs of Zion with such an one, you may meet him as the company of the prophets met Saul, with the "psaltery and tabret, harp and pipe," and the same spirit may come upon him as did upon Saul; like him, he may be in an ecstasy during the whole day and night, "speaking of divine things, and singing hymns of praise," and yet, he may be a Saul still. He may, like him, become *another* man, yet not a *new* man. He may have *another* heart, yet not a *new* heart. He may sing the songs of Zion, and yet be a child of the Devil.

"Behold, all ye that kindle such a fire, that compass yourselves about with such sparks, this shall ye have of the Lord's hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."‡ Your joy is

* 2 Tim. i. 12.

† 2 Tim. iv. 8.

‡ La. i. 11.

like the crackling of thorns, it is an expiring blaze; and your spiritual illuminations will only serve to light you down to the regions of darkness and despair.

By your *works* then, by the *character* we have already described, and *not* by your *feelings*, judge yourselves. Would you know a good tree, you would not judge by the circulation of the sap, nor by its luxuriant branches, nor by its numberless blossoms, but, by its fruit. In like manner, would you judge of a tree of righteousness, it must be by the *fruit*; and if joy be found growing together with "love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance,"* then are ye of the Lord's own right hand planting. But, if joy be alone, or even if it appear first, suspect it as the degenerate fruit of a "strange vine."

But, as joy alone is no sufficient proof of grace, so, for the comfort of those who mourn, let it be remarked, that sorrow and desertion are not sufficient evidences of an entire want of grace. We have already seen, that they who "fear God, and obey the voice of His servant," may be in "darkness and have no light." We are further assured upon infallible authority, that "light and joy are sown" for them. It remains now that we inquire what course they must pursue, in order to reap an abundant harvest, which is the

III. Part of our subject—viz. to give some suitable *directions* to those who are under the hidings of God's countenance.

It is obvious that sensible enjoyments are not under our own control. It is our duty to seek them, but they are rather a *gift* and a *reward*, than a *duty* to be performed. We can no more bring assurance and the light of God's countenance to the soul, than we can recall the setting sun or cheer again a darkened world. Joy is an effect produc-

* Gal. v. 22. 23.

ed by some happy accident, and not by a mere effort of the mind ; and that accident or cause in the case before us, is "the light of God's countenance." It is not right then to urge the self-condemned or deserted soul to rejoice, in the abstract ; but to regain the forfeited expressions of divine favor ; then joy will spring up in the soul, as naturally as light and warmth attend the beams of the sun. Urge the incarcerated debtor to rejoice in his chains—urge the disconsolate disciples to rejoice when their master is in the grave—urge the sick to rejoice when nature's best gift is snatched away by the cruel hand of disease : the sick will reply, "restore me my health"—the disciples, "bring back our master from the tomb"—the debtor, "cancel my debts"—and then will we be no more sad. Just so the disconsolate Christian ; "Let me hear the voice of my beloved—let my light come—then shall my heart be filled with gladness, my mouth with laughter, and my tongue with singing."

But who can "command this loving kindness" save God only ? And yet, there is a proper course for the Christian to pursue under such circumstances. This course is laid down in our text—"Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

Thus did the Psalmist when he was in the "depths." "I wait for the Lord," saith he, "my soul doth wait for him, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning : I say more than they that watch for the morning."* Faith, as you perceive, keeps him from sinking. Like one in perils of water in the night, he longs for the morning skies, and, with the same confidence that his sun will again shine.

David is an eminent example likewise in another respect : he first *makes confession of his sin*.

* Ps. cxxx. 5. 6.

God never deserts his people without a cause ; and that cause must be first ascertained and removed, before a well-grounded trust can be reposed in Him.

Perhaps, my hearer, some sin lies at thy door. It may be, what you call only a "small violation" of the Sabbath, or the neglect of some "little" relative duty, and God is writing his hatred of thy sin in deep and piercing characters. O! search it out and put it from thee. Nothing separates so effectually between God and the soul, as *sin*. Avoid it as you value the smiles of God. Yea, abstain from all appearance of evil ; for so long as the vapors of sin ascend, the light of His countenance will be withheld.

Perhaps you are *too much engrossed with the concerns of this life*, and you make not the glory of God your chief aim ; this also eclipses His face. "Them that honor me," saith He, "I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." *

Perhaps *covetousness* has a secret sway over your heart. God and mammon cannot dwell in the same temple. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him. I hid me and was wroth." †

Perhaps *pride*, either in learning, fortune, rank, office, or influence, has spread a secret coil around your soul. "The proud, God beloldeth afar off;" but "with him," saith He, will I dwell "that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." ‡

Perhaps your *companions* are children of darkness, and such as draw your soul from God. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ?" * "Come out from among

* 1 Sam. ii. 30.

† Isa. lvii. 17.

‡ Isa. lvii. 15.

* 2 Cor. vi. 14.

them, and be ye separate, and then God will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be his sons and daughters,"* and He will smile upon you.

Perhaps your *recreations*, either in their nature or their extent, are inimical to communion with God; they may clog the soul rather than give it an edge for devotion. "Lovers of pleasure"—"they who send forth their children in the dance, and take the timbrel and harp"—say to God in their hearts, "depart from us." Hence "their candle is put out, and God distributeth sorrows in his anger."†

Perhaps your sin may be of a more spiritual nature still. You may not be ardent enough in prayer, earnest enough in searching the Scriptures, deep enough in meditation, penetrating enough in self-examination, spiritual enough in your various religious exercises.

Now God seeks those who "worship Him in spirit and in truth"—He searches them out as it were, that He may "manifest himself unto them as He doth not unto the world." It was not long after He saw Nathaniel under the fig tree—most probably pouring out his soul to God—ere He exhibited Himself to him "in the face of Jesus Christ."

By all means then, dear deserted soul, search out thy sins of *omission*, and put forth all thy faculties in God's service; for, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them," saith Christ, "I will manifest myself to him."‡ Search out thy sins of *commission*, and put every evil work far from thee. Go on steadily to purify thy heart—"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." If thou wouldest have the Lord look pleasantly upon thee, let this be thy great aim, to "walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;" and then, follow the direction of our text; "*Trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon thy God.*"

* 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

† Job xxi. 11. 12. 17.

‡ John xiv. 21.

1. *Trust in the name of the Lord.* Trust—confide in—you know what the term imports in common concerns; it is not merely venturing as a last hope or experiment, as the shipwrecked mariner ventures his life on a fragment of the wreck; but it is that confidence, which he would feel on a towering rock, whose summit was never dashed by the highest wave. It is that confidence which Noah felt in the ark, when the “hoarse thunder roared a loud onset to the gaping waters.” He questioned not his right to use the ark; he questioned not his safety in it,—though “the windows of Heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up,” and neither sun nor moon were seen for many days—for, “the Lord shut him in.” This is *trusting in God*.

Trust not in yourself or in your own righteousness. Trust in God in a way of duty, but oh! trust not *to* your duty. Read, meditate, pray, commune,—but confide in neither the one nor the other, but only in the “name of the Lord;” for in Christ He is Emmanuel—“God with us”—and who would build on the sand of human performances, when the rock of eternal ages is at hand? Trust in God. His bright beams alone can dissipate thy darkness. “The moon and all the stars, cannot make it day in the world, nor can means and ordinances make it day in thy soul.” They are not *the light*, but they are mediums for the communication of that which is the true light. “The Lord shall be with thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.”*

Trust in His *mercy*, it is free; in His *truth*, it is immutable; in His *power*, it is omnipotent; in His *wisdom*, it is infinite. By His *wisdom*, He knows your wants; by His *mercy*, He pities; by His *power*, He can relieve; and by His *truth*, He

* Isaiah lx. 19.

insures relief ; for He has said, " Though for a small moment I have forsaken thee, with great mercies will I gather thee."*

2. "*And stay upon thy God*"—upon thy covenant relation to Him. Never forget that He is *thy God*. Call Him so, though He has apparently forsaken thee. After the example of Christ, still say " My God ! My God !" And though he frowns and puts into thy hands a bitter cup, still call Him " My Father." Though you walk not in the light of His countenance, say, " He will command the light to shine in my heart." Though you do not now *rejoice* in His name, still *hope* in Him, and say, " I shall yet praise Him for the health of His countenance."†

Trust implicitly, and wait patiently. " Stay upon thy God." " Though he tarry, wait." " Let patience have her perfect work." Not a moment will be lost by patient waiting. While *faith* says, " behind yon cloud my Father hides a smiling face"—while *hope* whispers, " shortly the Sun of righteousness will arise"—while *desire* longs for His healing beams—let *patience* teach them to wait the Lord's time ; " for the vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie."‡

Thus trust and wait, and the issue is certain. " It will surely come, it will not tarry." " Then thy light shall break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily ; thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward."§

" Who then is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light ? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

But, is this the only class present ! Would to God that

* Isaiah liv. 7. † Psalm xlii. 5. ‡ Hab. ii. 3. § Isa. 58. 8.

it were ! Are there now before us those who are in the darkness of nature ? Who enlighten and warm themselves by a fire of their own kindling ? who "compass themselves about with sparks ?" who place their hopes in their own righteousness ? and seek their happiness in their own devices ?

What shall we say to such ? shall we address them in the keen language following our text ? "Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled"—take all the satisfaction you can, and make the best of your portion—but, "this shall ye have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." Oh ! we feel for them too much concern, and love, and tenderness, and by all that is dear, we beseech them to "seek the Lord while He may be found," for this is their happiness. A *Christian* may have sorrows, and a *sinner* may have pleasures ; but "the darkest state of a saint is infinitely preferable to the brightest state of a sinner." "Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him," for "though weeping endure for a night"—even the whole night of life—"yet joy cometh in the morning"—in the morning of eternity, which will soon dawn.

But "woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him." "His light shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him."† Then shall he lie down in darkness, in the blackness of darkness forever, where no ray of hope ever comes. Then will he learn that his life was madness when he preferred the *ignis fatuus* of this world's joys, and honors, and profits, to the light of God's favor.

My dear hearers, are any of you of the number who are under this condemnation, that though light is come into the world, they love darkness rather than light ? I

* Ps. xli. 5.

† Job xviii. 5. 6.

· speak to you as men of wisdom and candor ; judge ye, I pray you, whether is better, the darkness of sin and ignorance here, and the darkness of eternal death hereafter, or the light of truth, and grace, and peace in this world, and the light of life in the world to come ?

I know that ye can discern between good and evil.

· Then show yourselves men ; receive the light in the love of it, and walk as children of light ; then will you experience its vivifying influence here, and when you are caught up to meet the Lord in the third heavens, ye shall always bask under the Sun of righteousness, and burn with unclouded splendor, and shine with spotless beauty as stars forever and ever.

SERMON X.

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."—
PROV. iii. 11, 12.

Amongst all the wonders of Providence, nothing is more strange to the eye of carnal reason than the dealings of God with His people. Many are children of poverty. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." * "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" † Many have been martyrs for His holy cause—"I saw under the altar, the souls of them that were slain, for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." ‡ Without an exception all pass under His chastening rod. "I beheld and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number"—even all the redeemed—"of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and one of the elders said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation," § &c.

Affliction, or godly discipline, is a primary condition of discipleship to Christ. It appears prominent on the very front of the gate that leads into the narrow way—"If any

* 1 Cor. i. 26.

† James ii. 5.

‡ Rev. vi. 9.

§ Rev. vii. 6—14.

man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." *

Of all men it is truly affirmed, they are "born to trouble as the sparks fly upward"—a necessary and just consequence of sin. Of the Christian it is emphatically said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation"—also the necessary and just consequence of sin.

However it may happen to others, *he* cannot escape ; for the love of sin and the world in him must be broken. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." † "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." ‡

The way to heaven is a straight way. It turns not aside for any obstacle. It deviates not for any impediment. It meanders not for the pilgrim's ease or pleasure. The heaven-bound traveller must pass through sloughs, through rivers, through deserts ; he must ascend the highest summit, and descend the steepest declivity ; he must be willing to tread the thorny road, and pass the narrowest straits between the deepest gulphs.

Mark the pilgrim with his face Zionward. Now you see him in a horrible pit—then, in the miry clay. Now, in the vale of trouble—then, ascending the hill of difficulty. Now, passing through the fire,—then through the flood. Now, beset with wild beasts—then, with men more wild than they. Now, eating the bread of adversity—then, drinking the bitter waters of affliction. And yet, taking it all in all, it is a pleasant way and a path of peace. He would not exchange it for any other way. In every state there is a hand to help, a staff to support, an eye to guide, a shield to guard, bread from heaven to cheer his soul, and, if the

* Matt. xvi. 24.

† Heb. xii. 6.

‡ Lam. iii. 33.

tear of sorrow bedim not the eye of faith, he sees in blessed prospect, a "crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Let it not be thought that Christians suffer because they are *Christians*, but, because they are *sinners*; not because they are holy, but that they may be more holy. A father chastises a son not simply because he is a son, but because he is sometimes disobedient. "God dealeth with us as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" There is this difference between the godly and the ungodly; both may suffer; but the one suffers as a slave, the other as a son; the one as a culprit, the other as a favorite; the one in the way of punishment, the other, of salutary discipline or chastisement.

That which awaits all, it behoves all to be prepared to meet. Afflictions, like fire, have a two-fold tendency; to harden or to soften; to consume or to refine; to make men better or to make them worse, according to the material operated upon. A man, according to his indifference or due consideration, his impatience or resignation, will find the rod a "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." Thus Pharoah hardened his heart more and more under the most awful and repeated judgments, whilst David under a single stroke from the hand of his God, was melted into penitence for his deep and aggravated guilt, and confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord," and justified Him in His punishment.

Under suffering the mind is naturally impatient; it ventures to indulge hard thoughts of God, to impeach His government and goodness. But "wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?"

When Providence takes away our relations, our property, our enjoyments, may we be angry with God? O! no, they are but gourds; and shall we charge God foolishly

because He has taken away a weed, at most a vine? They never were ours, and if they were, in the nature of things they cannot continue with us long.

Impatience is the height of impiety: it is practical atheism; it impeaches the justice of God. "Men imagine that they deserve caresses instead of rods," and so make Him to be an unjust Governor.

When we murmur against God, we make ourselves superior to Him, and fondly think that our poor, finite minds could have ordered our own affairs with more wisdom than His infinite wisdom and understanding.

Impatience is rebellion against the authority of God. The spirit that dares complain, would, if it could, chain the hands of Omnipotence, hurl Jehovah from His throne, and take the reins of government under its own control. "There is no sin strikes so directly at the attributes of God as this. It aims alike at His goodness, and righteousness, and holiness, and wisdom, and as little spares His sovereignty as any of the rest."

Thus did not Job, when the waves rolled over his head and almost swallowed him up. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" such was his language. He spake not, he thought not anything unworthy of the majesty and righteousness of God: "In all this Job sinned not with his lips." Impatience is not only the height of impiety, but it is the depth of folly. It exhausts the strength, drinks up the spirits, irritates the wound, and, like a hammer to the dagger, plunges it deeper and deeper into the heart. Impatience! what comfort did it ever yield? what loss did it ever repair? what wound did it ever heal? nay—what evils has it not produced? One of two causes must follow

as its bitter reward : either, the blows of the hand of the Almighty must fall still heavier until the stubborn will is subdued, or He will say, "Let him alone"—throw the reins upon his neck, and let him run, like a wild ass's colt, his mad career of sin. "Let him alone"—take away the rod and reproof, and let him join himself to his idols. "Let him alone"—give him up to a hard and reprobate heart for ever?

Observe, my hearers, that is the worst judgment of all others, when God hears and answers the prayer of impatience. Thus He heard and answered the impatient Israelites. Tired and dissatisfied with manna, they demanded flesh to eat, "And he gave them their request, "but"—oh! what a *but* was that—"but, sent leanness into their souls."* Lord, send me any plague, and continue it during thy whole pleasure, only answer not my prayers in wrath. Do what thou wilt with my person or estate, but oh! send not leanness, and blasting, and death to my soul!

Some receive afflictions with stoical apathy. Philosophy may tell us that this is virtue; but revelation tells us that it is folly and wickedness, equalled only by impatience and rebellion. Shall God speak and man not regard it? Shall He come from His place to His strange, "strange work," and man despise the rod? Shall God whet His glittering sword and man not tremble before Him? Behold! if any will not hearken, God "will set His face against that man, and will punish him yet seven times more for all his sins."† "The fire of His jealousy shall burn unto the lowest hell."‡ "Wherefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God;" "why should ye be stricken more and more?" "If God strikes and men grieve not; if they are so foolish that they will not know the judgment of their God, He will bring

* Psalm cvi. 15. † Levit. xxvi. 17. 18. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 22.

seven times more plague upon them ; cross upon cross, loss upon loss, trouble upon trouble, one sorrow upon another, till they are in a manner wasted and consumed."

It cannot be necessary for me to tell you that neither of these dispositions—neither impatience nor indifference, is the proper spirit in which to receive chastisement at the hand of God. "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of his correction."

The Christian under affliction, should be characterized by a patient, submissive endurance of the will of God. "Take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience."* Regard Job, and all those who "through faith and patience inherit the promises." Above all, "lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds," look to Jesus, who cheerfully "endured the cross, despising the shame."† Observe him in the sad hour when from his agonizing frame issued great drops of blood—"He kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."‡ He *felt*—and we too may have a most lively and pungent sense of our sufferings : He prayed—and we too may, *must* pray for deliverance from our distress. But here his character shone : when bruised by the rod of justice ; a world's guilt on his head ; his heart broken with grief ; in a situation more trying than we can ever be placed, or can conceive, he bows his will to the will of his Father ; "nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

Religious resignation implies more than a mere *suffering* of evil : it is a quiet yielding of ourselves to the whole and entire pleasure and disposal of God : and all this we must

* James v. 10.

† Heb. xii. 2. 3.

‡ Luke xiii. 41. 42.

be willing to do and suffer, because it is His will ; conscious that He requires us neither to do nor suffer any thing, but what is perfectly wise and good, yea, perfectly desirable. "To render our resignation entire, it is indispensable that it should be unmingled with murmuring, impatience, distrust of the goodness of God, or any dissatisfaction with His providence." This disposition is the only becoming temper in creatures suffering at the hand of God, and it will be the aim and exercise of all those who reverence Him.

The reasons or grounds on which the Christian is led to a patient, yea, cheerful, endurance of affliction, we shall reserve for another discourse. For the present, we shall content ourselves with urging the duty upon you by a few considerations.

1st. By the example of Christ. "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." * The Holy Ghost hath set down for us the persecutions, reproaches, buffetings, the agony, the cross, the passion he endured, to encourage us not to be "weary nor faint in our minds." You know that he came into the world without sin, but he went not through it without sorrow. Ought not we then to suffer with and for him, who suffered so much for our sins ? It is meet that we should follow him who left us so fair an example. It is meet that we should be made like him in suffering, if we would be made like him in glory.

2d. A patient and cheerful submission, softens our sufferings. Nothing so powerfully composes. God does what He will whether we consent or not. Our impatience hinders not His purposes, but our peace. But, if *we* will what *He* wills, even suffering is made sweet and easy. This is the secret of "rejoicing in tribulation."

* 1 Peter iv. 1

Shoot out bitter thoughts and words against God as you will, they hurt not Him ; but, like the arrows, which, it is reported, Cæsar caused in his displeasure to be shot against Jupiter, they will return and fall upon your own heads and wound both deeply and dangerously.

But, "be dumb, open not your mouth because God hath done it ;" that will blunt the shaft, assuage the pain, and ultimately heal the wound.

3d. Patience disarms affliction.

As lightning, according to some, overthrows every tree but the laurel, so affliction scathes every man, but the patient man. Be patient, and, if the affliction come from God, like a tree shaken by the storm, it promotes your growth ; if from man, it falls like an arrow shot against a rock ; if from the Devil, patience quenches the fiery dart.

4th. Affliction endured purifies from sin. "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."*

Affliction, simply considered, does not, but affliction sanctified does, purify and disengage the heart from sin, and wean it from the world, and the ways of the world. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word."†

Finally, brethren, possess your souls in patience. Are you a servant ? Like Jacob you may have a churlish master. Are you a master ? Like Mephibosheth you may have a traitorous servant. Are you a wife ? Like Abigail you may have a profane husband. Are you a husband ? Like Job you may have a foolish, wicked wife. Are you a brother ? Like Jacob you may have a merciless, cruel Esau for a brother. Are you a father ? Like Abraham you may have an Ishmael for a son. Are you a son ? Like

* 1 Pet. iv. 1.

† Psalm cxix. 67.

Hezekiah, you may have a wicked Manasseh for a father. In all these conditions of life let every man possess his soul in patience. "Now the God of peace strengthen you with all might through his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." *Amen.*

SERMON XI.

"My son, despise, not the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of his correction : For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth ; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."—PROV. iii. 11. 12.

We now proceed, as we promised in a former discourse, to adduce some of those reasons which lead the Christian to a patient, yea, cheerful endurance of affliction.

I. The Christian is patient in suffering under the conviction that all affliction comes from the hand of God. The common dialect of the world is,—“By chance such an accident befell me. Through inadvertence I sustained such a loss. By the infamy of such an one my character was blasted. Through imprudence such a sickness came upon me. All which may be true, humanly speaking, and regarding only second causes. But, the Christian, taught in a better school, looks beyond second causes to that invisible hand which guides the vast machinery of Providence, and according to his own will and pleasure, determines alike the fall of a hair, the death of a sparrow, or the dissolution of a world. “Affliction,” says Eliphaz, “cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ;*” but in their number, measure, and duration, altogether arise from the wise and righteous appointment of God. An instance

* Job v. 6.

or two will illustrate, and establish the fact, beyond all disputes and cavils of the carnal mind.

Joseph was rent from his father's house, and sold a slave into Egypt by his unnatural brethren: but what says the man of God? "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God hath sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance: so now, it was not you that sent me hither, but God."*

Consider also how Job suffered in his mind, body, and estate. How came these things to pass? You will answer, "The Sabians fell upon his oxen and asses and took them away; that fire from heaven destroyed his thousands of sheep; that the Chaldeans slew his servants and carried away his camels; that a violent wind overthrew the house where his children were, and buried them in its ruins." But, the man of God, accustomed to search out the sovereign and principal causes of events, raises his thoughts to a higher source, and how answers he this question? He says, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!"†

Take also the case of David, when that "dead dog, Shimei," cursed his lord and king. "Let me go over," says Abishai to David, "I pray thee, and take off his head." But what says the suffering, the reproached monarch? "Let him alone—let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him."‡ "The sin of Shimei was from himself, but David's affliction was from the Lord, and Shimei merely an instrument which God employed in correcting David for good."

We might also adduce the case of David's son and Lord in all his sufferings, which the sacred historians are ever careful to inform us, happened that it might "come to pass

*Gen. xiv. 5, 7, 8.

†Job i. 21.

‡2 Sam. xvi. 9—11.

according to all that was written :” but, especially, in that great tragic scene on Calvary, and all the steps which lead thereto. In the whole, there was not one blind stroke of chance; not a transaction from his birth to his death was independent of the counsel and foreknowledge of God. “Him,” says the Apostle, “being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken.”* And again, “For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”†

Seeing then, that all our afflictions and troubles come from a God who is “too wise to err, and too good to be unkind,” ought we not to humble ourselves and keep silence before Him, suffering patiently all His holy will and pleasure? That was a pious sentiment, uttered by good old Eli, and worthy to be adopted by every child of God—“It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.”

II. The Christian learns to submit to the will of God, under the conviction that his punishment is less than his sins deserve.

His afflictions may be heavy, and sharp, and great; they may be diversified and strange. To-day he may be in the flood—to-morrow in the flames. To-day they may pierce into the soul like fire—to-morrow they may pass over his head as an overwhelming torrent. But the rod has a voice, and He who sends it says, “O man, have I afflicted thee for naught, and chastised thee without a cause?” Forgotten sins are called to mind. Sins unknown or unheeded before, stand in dread array: their desert is fully apprehended; and the suffering Christian is

* Acts ii. 23.

† Acts iv. 27, 28.

made conscious, that if all the miseries of all men were to fall upon him, he deserves them and more. He feels that if God were "strict to mark iniquity," he must quickly be swallowed up in the depths of that pit which burneth with fire and brimstone, where he would hear no voice of comfort, where he would see no prospect of deliverance, where it would be judgment without mercy; in comparison with which, present afflictions are but as the crosses of childhood, compared with those of riper years, which commonly grow with our growth, and increase with our strength: or, as the trifling accidents of life—too insignificant to extort a sigh, too pitiful to leave a trace in the annals of the mind—compared with the ten vials of wrath poured on guilty Egypt; or, as the bubble which floats, and sparkles, and bursts on the bosom of the deep, compared with the troubled ocean, when the stormy wind lifts up its waves to heaven.

All which might justly descend in one accumulated load on our guilty heads, and we not then receive the half that our guilt deserves.

Therefore, to sorrow and mourn without measure in affliction and trouble, is nothing less than to show ourselves friends to sin, God's greatest abhorrence.

But, the Christian would rather suffer than sin, therefore he patiently submits to the righteous and gracious will of God—*righteous*, because sin deserves it all; and *gracious*, because in "wrath He remembers mercy," and punishes to save.

III. The Christian resigns his will to the will of God in affliction, being strengthened and supported by "exceeding great and precious promises."

We shall notice only two.

1st. There is the promise of the *Divine presence*. "When

thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee" *—not simply as an Omnipresent Being, for so He is with the devil—but as a God of infinite power and goodness. "Fear not," says He, "for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." † These promises imply that He draws nearer to His people, and is "with them" in a more special manner in their afflictions than at any other time. He goes with them into the very flames—so He was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. See you a child of God in a fiery furnace? Behold! there is another with him "like unto the son of God."

Christians may not always be aware of the companions with whom they are walking. Like the disciples on their way to Emmaus with Jesus, "their eyes may be holden;" but, He is with them for good. They may lose sight of the promise, but He who promises, never loses sight of them. In the gloom that surrounds them they see nothing but sorrow rising upon sorrow; they hear nothing but "deep calling unto deep," and expect nothing but to perish in the storm: but the master is in the vessel, or on the wave; He says "peace, be still," and there is a great calm.

See the Christian calling in his sorrow upon his God—His "God lifts upon him the light of His countenance, and puts gladness into his heart:" or, He says, "my grace is sufficient for thee;" and the sufferer thinks it good, even to be in affliction, if his God is with him there.

He thinks it better to be with his God on the cross, than with Satan in Paradise; and he says, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." ‡

2d. The Christian has the promise of preservation under all calamities. "When thou passeth through the rivers,

* Is xliii. 2.

† Is xli. 10.

‡ Job xiv. 14.

they shall not overflow thee," but, thou shalt go through as safely as Israel through the midst of the Red Sea. "In the time of great water floods they shall not come nigh thee." "And when thou walkest through the fire," though the furnace be heated seven times, "thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." * Behold the men who have been in the furnace! "upon their bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed upon them;" † because "they trusted in God." He delivered them. Such are the promises by which the Christian is urged on to the exercise of patience, and neither "despises the chastening of the Lord, nor fains when he is rebuked of Him."

Lastly. The strong consolation of the Christian is, that afflictions come not from God simply as a *sovereign* and *judge*, but as a *father*. He chastises not because He hates, but because He loves. He corrects not to destroy, but to save alive. Every trial comes with this inscription upon it, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God," and underneath, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." ‡ They shall labor and work together for the furtherance of our faith, our hope, our holiness, our glory.

Joseph's banishment and imprisonment worked together to advance him to the highest honors of Egypt. The bloody edict of Pharaoh was a step in providence to make Moses, first the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and finally, the head of the tribes of Israel. Yea, the Lord Jesus Christ himself was "made perfect through suffering." Even so the cross and tribulation banish sin, and help forward the work of

* *Is. xliii. 2.*

† *Dan. iii. 27.*

‡ *2 Cor. iv. 17.*

grace in the soul. "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope."*

The Christian under affliction, is like spices, which, the more they are pressed, the sweeter their perfume. He is like gold in the fire; he enters, perhaps corrupted with much alloy; the dross is consumed, and he comes forth purified and fit for the master's use. Or, he is like the stone in the workman's hand; at first rough and shapeless, but the hammer and the chisel reduce him to his proper size and shape, and he comes forth framed and polished, and fit for the temple. And when he hath "suffered awhile," he is carried to heaven, there to send forth through eternal ages a cloud of incense before the throne of God and the Lamb, sweeter than an offering of frankincense and myrrh. He is carried to heaven, there to be fixed as a precious jewel in the Redeemer's crown. He is carried to heaven, there to be placed as a lively stone in that spiritual temple whose "builder and maker is God." He is carried to heaven, where the blessed inhabitants "hunger no more, neither thirst any more;" "where sorrow and sighing shall flee away;" and where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Did I say that these considerations influenced the Christian to patience and resignation? Yea, more—let him fully enter into their spirit, and he even shouts a hearty welcome, if called to suffer for Christ's sake. "We glory in tribulation also:" saith the apostle, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."†

My brethren, arm yourselves *now* with patience against

* Rom. v. 3.

† Rom. v. 3—5

the trying hour. Lay up these thoughts in store against the dark and cloudy day.

Remember that all trouble comes by the special providence of God ; that the heaviest affliction is less than our least sins deserve.

Get your minds stored with God's precious promises. Especially lay before your minds this truth, " All things shall work together for good to them that love God."

Your sun may now shine, but the dark day will come. Your mountain may appear so strong that it cannot be moved ; soon it may be carried into the midst of a sea of affliction. To you it may appear that trouble creeps " decrepid with old age." You mistake—it spreads its broad pinions to the wind, and wings its flight swifter than an eagle to his prey. This night it may make the world to you a wilderness, and plant your steps with thorns. And oh ! not to have the " preparation of the Gospel of peace ;" not to have that faith in God's word, and that love to His will, which alone can enable us to submit to, and bear the cross, is, for " thy hard and impenitent heart only to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgments of God," without strength to bear them, or a friendly hand to remove them. But, " if ye endure," patiently, joyfully endure, chastening, then " God dealeth with you as with sons." "*If ye endure*"—a mere suffering of chastisement, which is common to men and to devils, is no evidence of a gracious acceptance with God—but, "*if ye endure*," that is, with faith, submission, patience, and perseverance, and " faint not," then " God dealeth with you as with sons." Then it is a broad seal, set to the patent of your adoption, " For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." *

* Heb. xii. 6.

Welcome, my hearers, welcome grace to your souls : cultivate faith, cherish hope, foster love, exercise patience, as the best friends in adversity or in prosperity. Faith is a cable strong—hope, an anchor sure and steadfast—love kisses the hand that guides the helm—patience is oil upon the troubled waves which wreck the peace and happiness of those who possess her not. “Patience disarms afflictions of their sting, and deprives temptations of their danger, and spiritual enemies of their success.” Patience brings in her train experience, and hope, and joy, and safety, and security.

And in this manner, the soul is prepared for that state where she will enjoy “peace, quietness, and assurance for ever.” Wherefore, “despise not the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of his correction ; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”

SERMON XII.

“As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope : even to-day do I declare, that I will render double unto thee.”—ZECH. ix. 11. 12.

Our text forms part of a prophecy addressed to the Jews at the approach of their deliverance from the Babylonish captivity. Their bondage is compared to imprisonment in a pit ; their release to the sending forth of prisoners from so gloomy a confinement. But it has a higher reference, to which this bears no more comparison, than the stones of the temple to the glorious shekinah within the veil.

We have here in a figure an affecting view of man in his natural state ; of the means employed for his redemption, and of the benefits resulting from that redemption ; all of which we propose to notice ; and, in conclusion, because many among us—like those Jews who lingered in Chaldea, enamored perhaps with its greatness and splendor, or their own ease and prosperity—still remain captives to Satan and enslaved by the beggarly elements of the world, we shall call upon them as “prisoners of hope” to turn to the strong hold, with the assurance of a “great recompense of reward.”

I. We are to look at the affecting view given of man in his natural state—“prisoners in a pit wherein is no water.” A state of nature is a state of bondage and imprisonment—the fatal consequences of man’s insubordination to the laws

of God. Being a transgressor, he is arraigned by divine justice ; held in a state of spiritual thralldom ; kept under the curse of the law, the dominion of Satan, and the power of his own lusts. As a traitor against the majesty of heaven, he forfeits all right and title to every favor, and is most justly exposed to an ignominious end. Sentence indeed is not immediately executed on fallen man, as on fallen angels ; but he is condemned already, and unless a mighty ransom can be found, nothing remains but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."*

We shall better perceive the force of the figure used in our text, if we glance at the construction of oriental prisons. In the inner part there was usually a deep pit, in which indeed there was no water, but an abundance of mire and mud. Accordingly, we read that Jeremiah, who was cast into the worst and lowest part of the dungeon, "sunk in the mire." They are said also to have sharp spikes, so placed at the top and bottom, as grievously to torment the incarcerated, and prevent their escape—a state which insured to them a miserable existence, and, in the end, inevitable death.

To this mode of punishment there are frequent allusions in the Old Testament. Thus in the speech of Elihu to Job : "He keepeth back his soul from the pit." "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit ; I have found a ransom."† The allusions in the Psalms are numerous and interesting. "Be not silent to me ; lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit,"‡ that is, lest I come to a miserable and untimely end. Again in Isaiah, "The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail."§ He must starve

* Heb. x 27.

† Job. xxxiii. 18, 24.

‡ Ps. xxviii. 1.

§ Is. li. 14.

and die if not hastily liberated. There is no light to cheer his eyes ; darkness reigns in all its terrors ; no bread to satisfy his craving appetite ; no water to quench his parched tongue ; "hungry and thirsty, his soul faints within him."

What energy do these facts give to those passages, which speak of our moral condition under the idea of imprisonment ; imprisonment in a deep, dark, miry pit !

Yes, my brethren, it is a melancholy fact, that there is something in our condition by nature, strongly analogous to this wretched state. Is the prisoner we have placed before you, immured in darkness ? We are buried in the shades of mental darkness. Is he a captive in chains ? We wear the heavy chains, and endure the iron bondage, of natural corruption. Does death, certain death, await the poor captive ? Death, eternal death, stands ready to receive us within its devouring jaws.

This is true, dear brethren, of you, and of me, and of every one that is born of Adam. Yet men have a fatal propensity to lull their consciences to sleep, and to blind their eyes to their real character and condition, by taking delusive views of their nature, dignity and freedom, and of the ample range for their faculties which nature presents. The habits of our fallen state take the place of our primeval character, and we become enamored with those very chains which are our curse, and shame, and ruin. We persuade ourselves to forget,—and then we persuade ourselves to believe that God forgets too,—that we are rebels against his authority. Through blindness, through insensibility, or through a strange perversion of our intellect, like the maniac, we call our prison our palace, our chains our ornaments, and vainly imagine ourselves subject to no control.

But what is our boasted dignity ? Nothing better than a state of base servitude to sin and Satan.

What is our pretended freedom ? If we may judge from

facts, it is only, by renewed acts of sin to forge fresh manacles for our feet. And what our vaunted sphere of action? The narrow confines of a deep, damp, dark dungeon. We are "prisoners in a pit wherein is no water."

Why do we beguile ourselves with such false views? Let us rather see our real character, and look full upon our danger; and then, with all the earnestness which ought to characterize creatures whose eternal happiness is at stake, let us inquire after a way of escape.

Jeremiah found only one way. He tells us what he did in his distress; "I called," says he, "upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not."*

And could God hear and deliver him? and did He? Yes, He did; and know this, O! fellow sinner, that though thou art cast into the lowest depths of guilt, remorse and misery, there is a way of escape open for *thee* to God. "He will deliver thy soul from death." Already the sorrowful sighing of many a prisoner has entered the ears of the Lord of Hosts; and, "according to the greatness of his power, He has brought the prisoners out of the prison house; and delivered those who were appointed to die." He gave His Son for a covenant of the people; that He might "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

This leads us,

II. To notice the divinely appointed means of our deliverance—namely, "By the blood of the covenant." Not by the covenant of works, nor by the covenant of circumcision, nor by the covenant made with Israel at Sinai, ratified by the blood of beasts; but by the covenant of grace, sealed with the blood of Christ, called here the Church's covenant, be-

* Lam iii. 55—57.

cause it was a covenant made on her account, and for her interest in Christ, her covenant Head. Various solemnities were used by the ancients in the ratification of contracts or covenants. Sometimes it was by the simple union of hands, as we read in Ezek. xvii. 18. "Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo ! he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape." The Hindoos, to this day, ratify an engagement by one party laying his hand upon the hand of the other : and among ourselves, the most solemn of all contracts is signified by joining hands. Sometimes a covenant was ratified by erecting a heap of stones, to which a suitable name was given, referring to the subject matter of the covenant. Thus when Jacob made a covenant with Laban, they erected a heap of stones and called it "Galeed," that is, the heap of witness.* Again it was by giving and receiving a present, as when Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech.†

In the 18th chapter of Numbers we read of "a covenant of salt,"‡ which expression refers to the oriental practice of ratifying their federal engagements with salt, an emblem of incorruptible fidelity and friendship. Various other modes were used ; but the most solemn of all was a covenant sealed with blood. Jehovah instituted the bloody rite of circumcision as a token of the covenant between himself and Abraham. And in the Mosaic constitution, the blood of the victims slain in sacrifice is called, "the blood of the covenant." In like manner the covenant of redemption is ratified by, yea, actually founded upon, and accomplished by, the shedding of blood, even the "precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."§ Referring to this, our Saviour, when instituting the sacramental supper, after giving the cup, said, "this is my blood of the New

* Gen. xxi. 47. † Gen. xxi. 22—27. ‡ Num. xviii. 19. § 1 Pet. i. 19.

Testament, (or covenant) which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins."* Without this blood shedding, there had been no covenant of grace, no pardon for sin, no redemption from hell, no admission into heaven. See what a price was put upon our souls! nothing could ransom them but the precious blood of Christ. See what violence was done by sin to the holy law of God! nothing could atone for it, but the blood of Christ. See how sin had excited the anger of divine justice! nothing could appease it, but the blood of Christ. Who could have found such a ransom? who could have found such an atonement? who could have found such a days-man, but, the infinitely wise, the infinitely good, the infinitely gracious God? "I have found," says Hé, angels could not, man could not, *I*, Jehovah, "have found a ransom." Yes, *He* has found it, and to Him be all the glory. But what is the *nature* of this covenant? perhaps its terms are too stern, too hard to be complied with. No—it is a covenant of grace, or free favor. On the strength and ground of this covenant, Christ came "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."†

Through this covenant, all who have been saved received the blessings of pardon, peace and reconciliation, and found admission into the kingdom of glory. In virtue of this covenant, the ministers of God are sent into all the world, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to every creature.

But is it an *abiding* covenant? May it not have become null and void? "Thus saith the Lord, if ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their seasons: then may also my covenant be broken with Da-

* Matt. xxvi. 28.

† Is. lxi. 1.

vid my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne"*—in which passage the reference is to Christ.

Yes, it is a "*covenant ordered in all things and sure*"—a covenant never to be forgotten or broken—more firm than the ordinances of heaven.

There is a covenant of nature, by which it is ordered that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."† Thus firm is the covenant of redemption in Christ Jesus. While the earth remains, Christ shall have a Church. "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days," till "time shall be no more." O! give thanks unto the Lord, for the gates of *Zion* are open still, open to you, open to all.

III. Let us notice the blessed state to which believers are advanced, by reason of the covenant of grace,—namely, to *liberty*, and to *safety*.

1st. They are brought into perfect liberty.

"By the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."‡

The liberty of which sinners boast, is an imaginary liberty; they boast of a false gift. The servants of sin fancy themselves free, only when they have broken through all restraints, and neither fear God nor regard man. Alas! they deceive themselves. None are really free, but those whom Christ sets free from the love, and power, and curse of sin. When Christ by his power and grace, breaks the dominion of corruption in the soul; when he takes away the guilt of sin; when he removes an evil heart of unbelief, and renovates in apostate man, the scattered

* Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21.

† Gen. viii. 22.

‡ Rom. viii. 36.

fragments of reason and virtue, arming the soul against the fiery darts of the wicked one ; when he sends the spirit of adoption into our hearts crying, " Abba Father," and gives us an inheritance among his children ; then, and not till then, we enjoy glorious liberty. Then ; and not till then, are we really free.

Then may we sing with the Psalmist, " He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." *

2d. A second advantage accruing to the believer from this covenant of grace, is, *safety*. This safety is intimated under the idea of protection from a pursuing enemy. The wicked one and his angels, burning with all the malice and fury of the infernal pit, aim a deadly blow at man, and must succeed against all who have not found a hiding-place from the storm of his fury. But Christ is an impregnable fortress. " The name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." †

The Psalmist accumulates expressions to show the fullness of his safety in the favor of Jehovah. " The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust ; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." ‡ Can salvation be more complete ? Can safety be more certain ?

Does the enemy come in like a flood ? his waves dash and die at the base of the believer's rock.

Does he compass him about as a besieging army ? His fortress bids defiance to all the assaults of earth and hell.

Does he shoot against him with a bow of steel ? his ar-

* Psalm xl. 2, 3.

† Prov. xviii. 10.

‡ Psalm xviii. 2.

rows are spent before they reach his high tower. Emphatically, and in the highest sense, the believer laughs at the shaking of the spear, and thus he sings—

“ Should all the hosts of death,
And powers of hell unknown,
Put their most dreadful forms
Of rage, and mischief on :
I shall be sa’ed,
For Christ displays,
Superior power,
And guardian grace.”

They who know the Lord as the God of their salvation, and learn to fear, trust, love, and serve Him, choosing Him for their portion, and waiting for his mercy unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ, according to the covenant he has mediated, may expect from him perfect safety, and every conceivable blessing. Nay, words cannot express, nor imagination conceive, all the Lord is, and will be to them, through time and to eternity.

In one word, “a Man”—the man Christ Jesus—“ shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place ; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” *

O believer ! give thanks unto the Lord and sing praises unto his name. Come, make the only return in thy power ; acknowledge and declare before men, the goodness of Jehovah, ascribing all the glory where it is due. Come, “ take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord, and pay thy vows in the presence of all his people.” †

Come, present yourselves, your souls and bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him, “ who by

* Isa. xxxii. 2.

† Psalm cxvi. 13 14.

himself once offered, hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." *

Think much upon the blood which sealed the covenant of thy redemption. Then "look to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged, and to the rock from whence ye were hewn." Then, take a large and comprehensive view of the blessings resulting from that covenant. Think much upon thy *liberty*, only "use it not for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God."† Think much of thy *safety*, only beware of carnal security; and let that grace which made thee free, have all thy confidence, and all thy praise.

We turn now to those who are not sensible of their danger; who are still in bondage to sin and Satan; who know nothing of the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free; and who declare by their conduct that they despise the covenant of grace, and the mercy of God. How large a portion of every congregation this class comprehends, it is melancholy to tell. How few who hear me will lay these things to heart! How many, Gallio like, will go away caring for none of these things!

You may not feel your danger; you may not be sensible of your wretched state; but if there is truth in heaven, if there is truth in God, if there is truth in His blessed word, you are by nature,—that is, as you are born into the world, and as you remain without regenerating grace, in a condition which must terminate in eternal death.

This world is indeed a prison house to the ungodly. Their corruptions are the chains, and their guilt, the deep damp pit.

Yes, O ye unconverted! you are subjects of the worst kind of imprisonment; but, blessed be God, ye are "pris-

* Com. Service.

† 1 Pet. ii. 16.

oners of hope." They who are dead are beyond all hope, but for you there is a way of escape. Christ sets before you an open door; he comes on purpose to proclaim the year of jubilee; and to you he says, this day, by the mouth of his servant, "Go forth and show yourselves."

He represents himself as a strong hold, and you are exhorted to turn into it. The Gospel recommends you to renounce every refuge of lies, and to regard Christ as your only Saviour and Protector.

Go, fellow sinner! go without hesitation, without delay, to him who alone can deliver you from the wrath to come, and bring you into the liberty of God's dear children. Behold—

"Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and power."

Do you still turn a deaf ear? Look at that gracious promise with which this exhortation is enforced. God strives to woo you, to entice you from your folly and danger to Himself. He promises that you shall lose nothing by turning to Him. "Even to-day do I declare," says he, "that I will render double unto thee."

"*To-day*"—in this very present time. Are you called to mourn some pleasure? He will render *double* unto you. "His ways are ways of pleasantness and all his paths are peace." Are you called to make some sacrifice? He will render *double* unto you. "And Jesus said, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time; and in the world to come,"—amazing to tell!—"eternal life."*

* Mark x. 29. 30.

Art thou called to maintain an arduous conflict? "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."* "He will render *double* unto thee." "He that overcometh shall sit with him on his throne," and receive a "crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give" to all who "fight the good fight of faith." He will give not only what you desire, but above all that you can ask. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."† There is no doubt of this great recompense. "*I declare it*," says Jehovah, "*I gave my word and my oath*." "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."‡

How astonishing is the condescension of God! How wonderful his mercy! How unreasonable that men should shut their ears to such gracious invitations! Would you not think the prisoner mad who would not ask for mercy, when his judge had assured him of a full and free pardon, and complete reinstatement in all his forfeited privileges? Would you not think the man beside himself, who chose to remain a prisoner when his sovereign proclaimed a general pardon? Not half so mad as thou, O sinner! who refusest the calls of God's mercy.

Beware brethren, beware of delay. "To-day, while it is called to-day" hear his voice. *To-day*, you are prisoners of hope. *To-morrow*, you may be in that prison where hope never comes. *To-day* the strong-hold is open before you. *To-morrow* the gate may be forever closed. *To-day*, mercy stretches forth her hand to lead you out. *To-morrow*, you

* Rev. ii. 10.

† Eph. iii. 20.

‡ Heb. vi. 17, 18.

may be led forth by the hand of Justice, *To-day*, if you go forth, it will be to double mercies. *To-morrow*, it may be to double pain, to double ruin, to double condemnation. Flee then, sinner ! flee for thy life ! nor stop nor stay on all the plain until thou hast clean escaped from the hand of the Avenger and hast found a sure hiding-place in Christ Jesus.

SERMON XIII.

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."—PROVERBS iii. 9, 10.

The most unwelcome of all subjects of appeal from this sacred place, is probably the duty contained in the text.

Yet, it is incumbent on ministers to urge their people to great liberality. The *rich*, we are to "charge that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute;" the *poor*, that they "cast in their mite into the treasury" of the Lord; and *all men*, that they "minister as of the ability which God giveth."

Until we have declared this duty, we have not declared the "whole counsel of God;" and we would not for the world that any should charge it upon us, that they had not visited or relieved Christ in his suffering members, or that they had rendered little or no service to his kingdom in the world.

To rouse benevolence from its slumbers is a noble task, and would do honor to an angel's powers. It is a venturesome task, so deeply seated is "the love of money in the human heart." Though we thus speak, my dear hearers, we do not intend to accuse you of repugnance to the subject more than others; far from it; your liberality has

often "abounded unto many;" and we promise ourselves a very patient hearing, the more especially as the end we propose, is not an immediate call upon your benevolence. We earnestly solicit your attention to the *principles* we have to lay down, and as earnestly ask, that, if they be found to be according to the word of God, you will adopt them, but, if not, that you will reject them.

Most of us have done something, but of whom can it be said, "He hath done what he could?" Our desire is that ye may "abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

The doctrine of our text is, that we must serve God with our property, and we shall prosper in the world.

We shall first consider the *duty*, then the *promise*.

I. We shall first consider the obligation we are under to "honor the Lord with our substance, and with the first-fruits of all our increase." If selfishness and the love of money had not blinded men's eyes, and hardened their hearts, this is an axiom in morals that would have been self-evident: but, so have they darkened the understanding, and congealed the affections, that men—aye, *Christian* men—will scarcely yield either to revelation or reason.

Though such a one, under a powerful or touching appeal, may, like an icicle in a winter's sun, shed a drop or two of benevolence, he soon reverts to his original frigidity, and remains cold and impenetrable as heretofore.

Indeed, nothing but the abiding influences of the Spirit can effectually soften the heart, and cause a perpetual stream of charity to flow. May holy fire descend this day into every bosom, that this fruit may be in us and abound!

The duty under consideration is enforced both by reason and revelation. We cannot deny that God is the ori-

ginal proprietor of all that we possess—"The silver is mine and the gold is mine." He is the Lord, we are His stewards. "It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful," but he is not faithful, who diverts that which he holds, from the purpose designed by the rightful owner. He is the king, we are the servants to whom various talents are entrusted, "till He come;" but he who consumes them on "the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life," betrays his trust, is an unfaithful servant, and must "receive an unfaithful servant's reward." It is He who gives us whatever we possess. "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low and lifteth up." "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." Reason then dictates, that if God, in His wise and inscrutable Providence, has made such a disparity among men as we see to exist, they who have this world's goods should be ready to minister to the wants of the poor, who are destitute of them; for, they are the representatives of Him "who had not where to lay His head."

Reason dictates that if we possess a blessing for which others are perishing—and we, who have the word of life, do possess richly such a blessing—we ought to make them sharers with us. If a country is to be defended, or a fire to be extinguished, reason dictates that it is every man's duty to do his share towards it; and, we add, by the same rule, if the sick and poor are to be relieved, and the Gospel is to be carried to all the world, every man should take a part in it.

Besides, there is no real good simply in *possessing*; the good consists in *using*. The man who is poor, and yet has the heart to relieve the necessities of a miserable neighbor, though it be but with a cup of cold water, is a richer man,

and has more true enjoyment in the little that he possesses, than the miser who could purchase an empire with his gold. The former inherits like a rational being, the latter, like a mere animal. The one rises like an angel above the world, the other might as well be transformed into a worm, and be doomed to crawl the residue of his days in the rich mines of India or Peru.

Again, as Christians we profess to surrender all we have to Him who gave it. Our souls and bodies to be instruments of His glory; our time to be employed in His service; our faculties to celebrate His praise; and our property to feed His poor, and advance the interests of His kingdom.

But we mock God if no portion, or but a small portion of either is actually thus employed. Indeed, my hearers, it is the principal way in which we are to answer the great end of our being. There is no glorifying God, no enjoyment of Him here and forever, but by the real consecration of all that we have, and are, to His service.

Reason, therefore, I say, dictates the propriety, the necessity, of "honoring the Lord with our substance."

Again, according to the economy established by God in his Church, it cannot prosper and extend but by human instrumentality. By human exertions, under the blessing of Heaven, it has diffused the benign and saving influences of the Gospel throughout a large portion of the world; and had Christians been forward according to their ability, we should not now have seen, in this nineteenth century, six hundred millions of our race in pagan darkness.

We profess now to stand on the tip-toe of expectation, looking for the latter-day glory of the Church; and we lean upon the sure word of prophecy; but Christians must do vastly more than they have yet done before that day ar-

rives. We might as well expect to see our forests and deserts crowned with the golden sheaf without the labor of the husbandman, as expect to see a moral wilderness, more barren still, become a spiritual vineyard without the spiritual husbandman's toil. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

God has indeed decreed that the world shall be filled with peace and righteousness, but He has not decreed to do it without means. He has accomplished a way of salvation for our race, but He has left it to us to make it known. He has sent glad tidings into our world, but He has made it our business to proclaim the joyful sound.

I mean not that all must become preachers and teachers, but I mean that we must all either preach and teach ourselves, or enable others to do it. It is our duty to build churches, educate ministers, support schools, print Bibles, send missionaries, and, in short, use all possible means to extend the kingdom of Christ, evangelize the world, and save souls. If, either by direct opposition, or by doing nothing, or by not doing all that we can, we retard this glorious work, so far we rebel against the will of Heaven, and oppose the best interests of man.

God could, no doubt, evangelize the world and save sinners, independently of our aid; but it has pleased Him, and His debtors we are that it hath so pleased Him. "So it hath pleased Him," should silence all cavils, and insure all obedience. Yea, it should be our pleasure, our highest joy, to be instruments in His hands to accomplish His gracious purposes. It is an honor angels have not: the great Head of the Church passed by angelic hosts and put it upon earthen vessels. Were angels permitted to preach the everlasting Gospel, angel-visits would not be

"few and far between;" their flight to this lower world would be like that on the morn of the nativity; some one of swiftest wing would first cast his glory upon us; but, "suddenly there would be with him a multitude of the heavenly host."

Soon should we see what John in vision saw, "An angel"—yea, a multitude of the heavenly host—"having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." And shall man refuse an honor that would grace an angel? God forbid! Who would not be an ambassador for God? Do I not hear every heart—at least every gracious heart—respond, "I will come up to the 'help of the Lord.'" I am ready to pour out my gold, and frankincense, and myrrh at the Redeemer's feet. I will "honor the Lord with my substance, and with the first fruits of all my increase."

Thus reason speaks: and what reason whispers, revelation thunders both in commands and threatenings; it gives "line upon line," and we depend more upon the artillery of God's word to carry any point, than upon the whole force of reasoning; for, where God's command fails to carry conviction to the mind, and to subdue man to obedience, reasoning,—even upon the most solid ground, with the utmost propriety of expression, with the minutest precision and accuracy of thought, and all the glow and graces of eloquence—is but as the shaking of the reed against leviathan: therefore, we should always make the word of God our sword and shield to defend every point of faith and practice, and our battering-ram to break down the strong holds of unbelief and subdue to obedience.

Hear, therefore, what the word of God hath said. "I command then that thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy poor brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in the land."

Deut. xv. 11. "Give alms of such things as ye have."
 Luke xi. 41. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." Luke xvi. 9. "While we have time, let us do good unto all men." Gal. vi. 10. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." 1 Tim. vi. 17. 18. "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not : for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. xiii. 16.

We are taught that one main stimulant in our labors and worldly business, is, that we may obey these commands. "Let him that stole, steal no more ; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." *

Obedience in this respect, is absolutely essential to the formation of a holy character. "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor."† Without the spirit and practice of benevolence, we are wanting in one main evidence of an interest in saving grace and heavenly blessings ; "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?"‡

It is truly astonishing how much stress the sacred Scriptures every where lay upon this duty. To commands are added examples. We might begin with the first martyr, and lead you through the tent of every pious patriarch, prophet and apostle, and you shall find them men of benevolence. Primitive Christians followed their course ; nor, blessed be God, has the stream of practical good-will yet

* Eph. iv. 28.

† Daniel, iv. 27.

‡ 1 John iii. 17.

ceased to flow ; indeed, perhaps from the beginning, it was never fed by so many tributary streams, never rolled in a current so deep, and pure, and broad, as at the present time.

Few or none of my hearers will, I flatter myself, dissent from the general proposition. We are persuaded that you will not. We have a pledge in your practice, and we have had occasion to rejoice in your liberality on many occasions. We are happy in being in the bosom of a people who have taken a stand, in this respect, above many congregations ; “ and yet, perhaps a degree of liberality even far beneath the scriptural and primitive standard, would be regarded by most as a prodigy to be wondered at, rather than an example to be imitated.”

We are led, therefore, to a second, and very important point, which possibly you may not at all have considered, viz : What *proportion* of our substance should be consecrated to the honor and service of God ? Although it may be a startling question, we promise ourselves as patient and candid a hearing on this as on the former part of our discourse.

In general the amount of liberality is measured either by the natural disposition, or according to the impulse of the moment, or under the influence of ostentation. But these are all false standards. Neither nature nor impulses are proper criteria in such a case ; they may stimulate a man to do more than he is able, and they may, and more frequently do, stint his liberality beneath his real means. Further, they are no proof of grace. A man who is naturally liberal may be as destitute of grace, as a man who is naturally a churl. It is only when obedience springs from regard to God's authority, whether it accord with our natural disposition or not, that it is an evidence of grace in the heart.

Having therefore determined, both by reason and revelation, that it is our duty to honor the Lord with our substance; and having resolved by the grace of God to triumph over selfishness, and thus to "honor Him," the next point which common sense dictates, is to determine *how much* we must honor God; for he who honors Him not as much as he ought, is but one step removed beyond him who honors Him not at all.

But this can only be determined in retirement, by mature deliberation, by the aid of the word of God, under the entire influence of a conscience rectified by the spirit of God.

Precise directions for each case we cannot give. All we can do, is to lay down general principles, and place before you such data as may aid your private deliberations. Much, very much, must be left to your own consciences; and it is wisely ordered that it should be so, because an unvarying measure, whilst unsuited to the different and often changing circumstances of individuals, would have a tendency to substitute a cold compliance with an exacting law, for the spontaneous tribute of a cheerful heart, whose free-will offerings are only limited by the restraints of duty. It is the motive alone that renders the gift acceptable.

Our appeal will be to the word and to the testimony, and and if we can find that God has laid down a rule or principle, that must be the standard of our conduct.

In this part of our subject we shall avail ourselves of the aid of those who have studied the matter before us. Dr. Cotton Mather, whose praise is in all the Churches, says—"Let it not be thought a hard saying, if I tell you that a tenth part is the least that you can bring under a solemn dedication to God, for whom, in one sense, we are to lay out all." "A farthing less," he adds, "would make an enlightened and considerate Christian suspicious of his in-

curing the danger of sacrilege." "The very light of nature will declare for it that the great God, who, with a seventh day is acknowledged as the Creator, should, with a tenth portion, be acknowledged as the possessor of all things."

The same has the sanction of the heathen. Pliny tells us that the Arabians set apart a tenth for sacred purposes. Xenophon informs us that the Grecians had the same practice. Herodotus, a celebrated Greek historian, who lived some hundred years before the Christian era, confirms the same. Festus, a celebrated grammarian of antiquity, says, "the ancients offered to the gods a tenth of every thing."

But what reason sanctions, and what seems to have been received as a law among the pagans, certainly was the law of God. "All the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruits of the tree, is the Lord's : it is holy unto the Lord."*

But, an objection may be urged, on the ground that the ceremonial law is abolished, and that therefore this obligation is abolished with it. This however remains to be proved. Let us go back a little further in the annals of the Church, and see whether it had not its origin prior to the giving of the Law. If so, then it follows of course, that it requires another act of the Lawgiver to make it null, besides that which made void the Jewish code.

This may may be taken for a rule, that whatever existed *before* the law, as well as *under* the law, exists under the Gospel ; that is, if it have either the express or implied sanction of Christ, and if there be the same necessity for the practice now as then. For instance, the Sabbath, infant membership, &c.

We appeal with no little confidence to Gen. xiv. 20, where we are informed that "Abram gave to Melchisedec

* Lev. xlvii. 30.

a tenth of all." "Christ is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec," of course the rights of Melchisedec belong to Christ; the tenth was the right of Melchisedec, therefore it is the right of Christ. "I do in my conscience believe," says the divine before quoted, "that this is an argument which cannot be answered."

If, my hearers, there is an analogy between the type Melchisedec, and the anti-type Christ, there must also be the same between the father of the faithful and his believing children; and it may well be questioned whether we are his children, so long as we do not resemble him in our works; for "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." "Seeth thou how faith wrought with his (Abraham's) works, and by works was faith made perfect."*

The next case we refer to is Jacob's vow at Bethel; "of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."† And, if we do not follow his example, we do not sufficiently declare that the Lord is our God, and that we are "Israelites indeed."

Whether Abraham and Jacob consecrated a tenth by special command, or whether it was a free-will offering, it answers our purpose equally well to prove that God must be honored with our substance, that it is highly expedient to adopt a system, and that a tenth of all that God gives us is a very reasonable proportion to return into His treasury.

It may still be asked, whether the New Testament has not broken down the tithing system? We answer, that we think it has so far as this, that no man or body of men, has a right to take it without our own consent. But, so far from diminishing, it has increased the obligation to "honor the Lord with our substance." Its language is, "Let every one lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."‡ "If any

* James iv. 22, 24.

† Gen. xxviii. 22.

‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth."* "Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also,"† i. e. in liberality to poor saints; and this he lays down as a proof of "the sincerity of their love," and he enforces it by an argument to which patriarchs and Old Testament saints were strangers, "For," says he, "ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty might be rich." As much as to say, "we do not ask it as an alms, but as an incumbent duty—the payment of a debt—the return of gratitude due to the Lord Jesus Christ."

The New Testament examples are, Zaccheus, who gave "half of his goods" to the poor; the poor widow, who cast into the treasury "all her living;" and the disciples, who "sold their possessions and goods" and gave to those who had need.

It may be asked again, whether a tenth is positively required from every individual? We are not prepared to affirm that it is; there may be cases when it is justifiable to contribute less. The New Testament rule is, "As of the ability which God giveth:" but we must be careful, specially careful, that it is *according to that ability*. It is a matter in which we must be punctiliously honest, remembering the words already quoted, "A farthing less than a tenth would make an enlightened and considerate Christian suspicious of incurring the danger of sacrilege." In determining this point, we should remember the words of God: "Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are

* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

† 1 Cor. viii. 7. 8. 9.

cursed with a curse : for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."*

In making this estimate, think of the Jews. They, with their imperfect light and their greatly inferior privileges, devoted to holy uses at least the tenth of their substance. And shall *Christians*, who live in the full splendor of Gospel light, do less for God than did the Jews ?

All papal dominions have, I believe, followed their example ; and shall *Protestants*, who possess a purer faith, be less abundant in good works ? Most European Protestants are under the same law, besides their enormous taxes and voluntary contributions, and shall it be said of *American Protestants* that they are more stinted in their liberality than all others ? The very pagans are constrained to offer not less than this proportion to their imaginary deities ; and shall it be said that *Christians* do less for their God than the Heathen do for idols of wood and stone ?

O, let it not be said, that pagans and Mahometans, Papists and European Christians, do more for the God whom they serve than do American Christians. If we do allow this, we shall at once bring a reproach upon our profession and upon our free institutions, and the world will not believe that men are better without religious establishments.

Whilst we allow that a tenth may, in some cases, be beyond men's ability, in others it falls below it, much below it. "To whom much is given," of him much is required. Some Christians have thus consecrated a seventh, a fifth, a third, the half—as did Zaccheus ; and others, having obtained a moderate and competent estate, have resolved never to be richer—not by sitting down in idleness, but by devoting to pious purposes whatever profits accrued from their business above the fixed sum.

* Mal. iii. 8, 9.

We do not pretend to dictate to any individual *how much* he must give. We only say that he *must give*, and should do it *systematically*, and then the *proportion* is a matter between God and his own soul.

Let your consciences determine this by the light of ancient examples, ancient laws, and ancient Christianity. But be honest—be *honest*, my dear hearers—be *honest*. If you fail to be honest you rob God, and His Church, and His poor saints. If you lie here, you lie “not unto men, but unto God.” Let each have such a charity account as he would not blush to exhibit, when called for at the last day, before an assembled universe; and remember, that it *will be exhibited*.

We dare not flatter ourselves, that we have proselyted to our sentiments all, or any considerable number of those whom we are addressing: if we have succeeded in convincing any, we have our reward. We are sensible that in any congregation, with most hearers, it is a topic opposed by *habits*, stronger than five barred gates of brass; by *prejudice*, a barrier high and formidable as the Alps; by *penuriousness*, stinted and barren as the flinty rock; by *covetousness*, greedy as the grave; and by *unbelief*, the worst of the train. Such are the unclean spirits which possess men in our day; their name is Legion; their cry is, “What have we to do with thee?” Where they dwell they have too firm a hold to be cast out by human strength. If they possess any of us, may He who commands the devils and they obey Him, eject them from us; then shall we be in a right mind to decide this point, and to follow Him in this way of duty.

Some will say that they are too poor to do any thing. Are you poorer than the woman with the two mites? And

are you quite sure that your poverty does not arise from your indolence; and your indolence, like the unjust steward, from your pride? Are you sure it does not arise from extravagance in yourselves or in your families? I cannot believe, whilst it is written that "the hand of the diligent maketh fat," that persevering industry, and rigid economy, under ordinary circumstances, will leave an individual too poor to obey a divine command.

Some will say that they must pay their just debts, and therefore they cannot exercise liberality—that they must be "just before they are generous." Be careful that these hackneyed proverbs do not blind your eyes, turn you from your duties, and so win your souls. Remember too, that God is one of your creditors, you owe Him something. Rather say, I must be *just and generous*.

Some will say that they do not know what their income is, and therefore they cannot set apart a regular portion.

We answer that you *ought* to know. I suppose that if you had a partner in your business, who was to have a tenth of the profit, some method would be contrived to ascertain the amount. Consider God as that partner. Besides, if you do not know how much you have for God, how can you tell how much you have for your creditors, and how much for your families? A good merchant should blush to make such an acknowledgment.

Many farmers have relieved themselves from this difficulty by cultivating a certain portion of land for this purpose, which they have religiously consecrated to God.

Some mechanics have set apart a portion of their time, the avails of which they present as an offering to the Lord.

Individuals with fixed salaries and incomes, can have

no difficulty in determining this matter. In short, a tender conscience, bent upon obedience, will easily devise ways and means to discharge its duty. It may increase trouble, it may call for self-denial, but what are they when duty and the soul are at stake?

As to the objects to which your beneficence should be applied, your own judgment will direct. Great discrimination however is necessary. The interests of our own Church, and that particular section of it to which you belong, would naturally claim your first attention; and then, like a stone cast into a lake, it must take a wider and yet wider circle, until the whole world is made to feel the effects of your benevolence.

Now, my dear hearers, examine this subject candidly, honestly. First, the duty of *benevolence*—then, of *systematic benevolence*—then, the *proportion* that should be systematically appropriated—then, examine your own conduct, remembering that omissions are sins, as well as commissions. The tree that brings forth no fruit, is nigh unto cursing, as well as that which brings forth sour grapes.

“If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

SERMON XIV.

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."—PROV. iii. 9, 10.

The general principle that Christians ought to be benevolent, none will deny. That some system in our charity is in a high degree expedient, few, I suppose, will dispute.

Systematic benevolence has many advantages, on which we cannot enter at large, but on which it may be proper just to glance.

System is good in everything. God is a God of system, and all his creatures that are not affected by sin are creatures of system. Disorder and confusion are infallible marks of depravity.

System is the very soul of business. Behold two families, two merchants, or two armies, the one moving by the most exact rules, the other, without regularity, without order; to which would you predict success? The answer is obvious. So system is of vast advantage in our charities. Without it, you are left to the whim of the moment, and are much exposed to the influence of nature, caprice and selfishness; with it, you are able to act entirely upon principle. Without it, the mind will be liable to be disturbed by every demand upon your purse, and you will, perhaps in reality, almost certainly in appearance, give "grudgingly and of ne-

cessity ;" i. e. through the force of entreaties, or to keep up appearances : with it, you will give cheerfully, and " God loveth a cheerful giver."

Charity without system, like a river in a bed of rocks, will ever be liable to obstacles. Like such a river, it may make a wonderful clamor ; but, in utility, it will bear no comparison with the deep, pure, uninterrupted current of systematic charity. Without system, the mind will seldom be able to judge of any call which requires money ; but with it, the merits of the case may be weighed in an even balance. How often is a good cause scouted and condemned, because, if the individual expresses approbation, he has a secret thought that he will be expected to give ; whereas, had he already set apart a portion for the Lord, he would be able to judge candidly, and then as freely to minister according to his ability and the necessity of the case.

Further, system in our charities will tend to make us systematic in all our concerns. It makes a man exact and frugal in his expenditures, and in this, if in no other way, brings an abundant temporal reward by making him a thriving man.

We proceed now to notice the promise connected with the duty we have been considering. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, &c., *so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*"

It is a peculiar trait of our holy religion, that it requires nothing from us, but it ensures an ample return. Our text is proof in point, and were there no other in the whole range of the word of God, this would be sufficient for the believing heart : but, there are many more, and, if there is truth in God, we shall be no losers by our charities.

The amount of the promise is, that "they who do good they have, shall have more to do good with ; and

that if we make our worldly estates serviceable to religion, we shall find religion serviceable to our worldly affairs."

We have shown in a former discourse that godliness has a tendency to make men healthy and to lengthen their days ; it has likewise a tendency to make men prosperous, according to the law of cause and effect. It gives contentment, and thus saves them from the risks attendant on speculations : it delivers from slothfulness, which eats the substance like a canker : it produces industry, and thus brings honey day by day to the hive : it makes men upright and just, and thus insures to them the confidence of their fellow men : it makes them economical, and thus delivers them from wilful waste which is the parent of want : and, lastly, it makes them benevolent, and thus ensures that which crowns the whole,—the blessing of heaven ! and such an one must be a thriving man.

It may be objected that there are some Christians who, notwithstanding all their endeavors, cannot thrive. God may in His sovereignty doom some such to poverty, but it is for wise purposes. We are of opinion that, perhaps in every case, if we could see with His eye, we should discover that they were deficient in some grace, or some duty. Either, property would be a snare to them, or they are not so industrious, contented, frugal, or charitable, as they ought to be. We must remember that the promise is to those who are right in *all* these respects. It is not to the benevolent alone, nor to the diligent and economical alone ; but to those in whom these traits all centre : and we are bold to challenge the world to produce an individual in whom they were combined, who did not prosper in his station in life.

As benevolence is the grand regulator of all the rest—for it follows, almost of course, that he who is benevolent upon right principles, will be industrious, and upright and economical—we may go further, and "challenge the world

to produce an individual whose charity has undone him. On the contrary, as the more we draw from living wells, the more freely they spring and flow, so the substance of the charitable man frequently multiplies in the distribution, as the five loaves and few fishes multiplied while being broken and distributed, and as the widow's oil by being poured out."

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, *so* shall thy barns be filled with plenty," &c. Is it necessary to prove that God can thus bless? We are not willing to think that any here present are so far gone in infidelity as to doubt it; but, if any such there be, let them remember Abraham and Lot, whose substance became so great under the blessing of God that "the land was not able to bear them." Remember Jacob, who with no earthly substance but his staff, left his father's house and returned "two lands," so that he was able to meet his brother with a present of near six hundred head of cattle.

Remember Job, who, under the smiles of heaven, became the greatest man in the East, and, under its frowns, the most abject and poor; and again, when the clouds dispersed, he obtained "twice as much as he had before."

That this blessing is linked with our regard to the cause of God and the poor, is equally manifest. Men are afraid that, if they should enlarge their bounty towards others, ~~they~~ or their children may be sufferers by it. No fear is more groundless. It would be endless to recount all the promises, which give the strongest pledges and assurances to the contrary.

"He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed"—blessed with an abundant blessing and recompense from God. "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will He pay him again."†

* Prov. xxii. 9.

† Prov. xix. 17.

That is not *thrown* away which is *given* away ; the Lord considers it as done to Himself : He takes account of it and promises to pay it again with interest. You cannot have better security than the word of God ; it is better than a mortgage on heaven and earth, for " Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

" God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister."*

" There is that scattereth and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat ; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."† We cannot give you a better comment on these words than is furnished by the pious Scott. " Liberality, exercised from right motives, is sowing seed, and God gives the increase, generally in temporal things ; but he that withholds, when a just and right occasion offers, seldom prospers much even in this world, for God metes to men in their own measure ; and bad crops, bad debts, expensive sickness, and a variety of similar deductions, soon amount to far more than liberal alms would have done. While, if God see it best, large increase, flourishing trade, kind friends and various other supplies and savings, soon reimburse the expenses of general charity."

St. Paul, applying the same idea to charity, says, " He that soweth little, shall reap little ; and he that soweth plenteously, shall reap plenteously."‡ You know how to apply this maxim in cultivating your lands, and it is no less true, however it may appear to blind reason and unbelief, in its application to spiritual husbandry.

Were there no other promise to this branch of Christian morals than that contained in Ps. xli. it should be enough :

* Heb. vi. 10.

† Prov. xi. 24. 25.

‡ 2 Cor. ix. 6.

"Blessed be he that considereth the poor ; the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord will prosper him and keep him alive ; and he shall be blessed upon the earth ;" "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing ; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." A beautiful agreement this with the Saviour's declaration, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Either they shall be exempt from the ills which befall others, or they shall be supported under them, and eventually find a happy release from them. If *troubles* come, the Lord will deliver them ; if *enemies* arise, the Lord will be their protector ; if *sickness* come, He will strengthen them to bear it with patience—yea—"He will make all their bed." They, who have in the days of health been ministering angels to the sick and needy, shall have a bed of pain made easy for them, by the hand of their Heavenly Father. "He will make all their bed in their sickness"—alluding to the care of a nurse attending the sick, and especially the tender care of a mother for a sick and darling child. You, who are mothers, will understand this allusion without further comment. As an old divine says, "That bed must needs be well made which God himself makes."

We next turn to promises of spiritual blessing. Isa. lviii. 8—11 is full of encouragement to those who attend to this duty. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily ; and thy righteousness shall go before thee ; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer ; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, 'Here I am.' If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity ;" "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul ; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day ;" "And the Lord shall guide thee

continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fails not." "Many professed Christians prove themselves hypocrites by a contrary conduct; and many real Christians walk uncomfortably all their days, because their liberality is disproportioned to their ability. The evidence of their sincerity in their professed love of Christ is therefore low; their assurance of God's favor towards them is low; their spiritual enjoyments are low; and their support in a dying hour will be low; "they little honor God, and He little honors them; He dispenses consolation according to their niggardliness to his people."

Experience proves that they who bear the strongest testimony to the Spirit by their good works, will have the most unequivocal testimony of the Spirit in their hearts that they are the children of God. "And they who in humble faith and love draw out their souls to the hungry, and abound in devising liberal things, are most comfortable, and most honored to be useful in the Church of God; (a sweet reward to the benevolent mind;) and often they have the most outward peace and prosperity."

Nor does the reward of the benevolent terminate with themselves; it extends to their children.* "I have been young and now am old," says the Psalmist, "yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."* It may be objected to this, that truly pious persons are sometimes reduced to want, and their children laid under the necessity of asking alms.

We answer that they are not such righteous persons as the Psalmist describes; "ever merciful and lending, ever dispersing abroad and giving to the poor."

* Ps. xxxvii. 25.

There are some who *seem* to be religious, and perhaps—strange as it may sound—*may* be religious ; but, they have little or no “bowels of compassion,” and what they give, they give “grudgingly.” Such an one you may see “forsaken,” and his “seed” you may see “begging bread ;” but, for this to be the case with a good man, who “honoreth the Lord with his substance,” “who is ever merciful and lendeth”—oh ! it can *never* be, while God is the everlasting proprietor of heaven and earth, and while *He cannot lie*. My hearers, I should sooner expect that yon sun should forget to rise, or that seed-time and harvest should fail, than that the promises of God on this subject should fail to be accomplished. Would you secure a blessing and an inheritance for your children ? be ready to communicate according to your ability.

Further, if the objects to whom you are kind, are praying people—and some will be, if you do any service to the kingdom of the Redeemer—you secure to yourself their prayers and blessings. “Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him ; the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me.”* I would rather be remembered by name at a throne of grace, by a poor, praying Christian, than be in favor with princes ; for princes shall die like other men, but “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” with Him who liveth forever.

At all events, my dear hearers, by the course we have recommended, you will become rich in good works, and *good works will be rewarded*. “Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”† Christ calls it laying up “treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.” The apostle calls it, laying up in store for *ourselves*—“charge them that are rich in this world, that they do

* Job. xxix. 12. 13.

† Luke xiv. 14.

good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."* Not for a stranger—not for your heirs—not for those who will scarce allow you a tomb-stone when you are gone—not for those who will not feel a spark of gratitude, but will rather insult your memory, and ridicule your parsimony, and a hundred times, while you are living, wish you dead, and when you are gone, complain that you did not leave your wealth to them sooner, and in larger measure—not for such, but for *yourselves*. Be wise then, my hearers, and make that use of your substance which will do you good in another and a better world. Like one about to emigrate to a foreign land, send at least some of your treasures before, and place them in the bank of heaven, "that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."†

"So an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."‡

Such, my hearers, is a specimen of God's promises to those who "honor Him with their substance." We say a *specimen*, for "the half has not been told you." How do you regard them ? As good words only ? And call ye yourselves *Christians* and *Believers*, and yet cannot credit promises so plain ? "Deceive not yourselves by supposing that you believe the promises of grace and mercy, whilst you believe not those which are annexed to your *duty*. He who believes not *all* God's promises, believes not *any*. As obedience has respect to all His commandments, so faith has respect to all His promises."

Prove your faith by your works. He who would rather trust a fellow man with half his estate, though he were a

* 1 Tim. vi. 17. 18. 19.

† Luke. xvi. 9.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 11.

model of integrity, than God with a tenth, cannot be a believer. Faith is an *active* principle ; it receives God's word and acts upon it. Take heed that ye be not among those who "profess to honor God but in works deny Him;" for, "if we deny Him," either in word or deed, "He also will deny us." He will deny us His blessing now, and deny that He knows us at the last day. Yea, He will curse such with a curse. While it is said, "He that giveth to the poor shall not lack," it is added, but "he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse."*

A bare intimation of the divine will upon any subject ought to ensure obedience, and will do so from every heart rectified by grace. But, it has pleased God to add motives to commands, to work upon our affections. He placed before angels and Adam, life and death ; and before Israel, blessing and cursing. From Mount Gerrizzim He pronounced blessings upon those who keep the law, and from Ebal, curses upon those who violate it.

Obedience is our Gerrizzim—a hill of blessings verdant and fertile : disobedience is Ebal—a hill of cursing barren and bare. "Many a curse shall he have who hideth his eyes" from the poor. We might bring before you a broad phalanx of curses, "terrible as an army with banners," awful as Sinai in a blaze, fearful as when God speaks from the secret place of thunders. Let one suffice—"Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little ; ye eat, but ye have not enough ; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink ; ye clothe you, but there is none warm ; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."† Mark the judgment by which God

* Prov. xxviii. 27.

† Hag. i. 4—6.

avenged their guilt. "Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house." * These Jews thought themselves unable to do any thing for the house of God; but their excuses were vain while they could build elegant houses for their own accommodation. How often do people who plead their inability to do any thing for God and the poor, lavish in needless expenses on their own persons and families, ten times as much as was required for better purposes! If men will do thus, they must expect corrections. Many think with those Jews, that their poverty and trouble is a sufficient excuse, and that their economy must begin at the house of God, and the cottage of the poor; whereas, their poverty and their trouble may be intended as a correction for having done so little, and should admonish them to amend their ways. God notices their excuses, but they are not so readily admitted by Him as by themselves, and "He visits them for these things." They sowed plentifully and reaped sparingly. He called for drought—He sent the devourer—He blasted the labor of their hands—and the little which they brought home, "He did blow upon it" and scattered it as chaff. It was unaccountably wasted and driven away, as if He had blown it away with a strong wind. And why all this? Did God do it without a cause? No—He never punishes without cause. Truly, it was that they had neglected His temple and suffered it to "lie waste."

Malachi prophesied against the same people. "Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even

* Hag. i. 9.

this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*

They did consider their ways and proved Him, as He commanded them, and then came the promised blessing. “Consider now from this day and upward—even from the day that the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree hath not brought forth: *from this day will I bless you.*”

My hearers, we have known something of “hard times.” Blessed be God, He has not chastened us in His *hot* displeasure; but He has done enough to show us what He can do, and to lead us to “consider our ways.” And is there not a cause? Are you quite sure that our punishment does not point us to our sin, and that that sin is not *covetousness*? *Search and see.* Have you done for God all that you could, and all that you ought? It is said of the late Henry Thornton of London, that when heavy losses came upon him, he always investigated his charity account. You see that poverty and hard times form no excuse for lack of benevolence; so far from it they ought to stimulate to a more diligent discharge of the duty.

If your deficiency in this respect cause the “hard times,” then remove the cause and the effect will cease. Say not with the stout-hearted Jews, “what profit is it to keep His ordinance?” but remember the words just quoted; “Prove me now herewith if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground;

* Mal. iii. 8—10.

neither shall the vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of Hosts."*

Thus, my dear hearers, we have discussed a great Christian duty. We have endeavored to show you that it is obligatory upon you to "Honor the Lord with your substance," on the ground, that He is the original proprietor of all—that He has constituted us His stewards and almoners—that He has done so much for us—that we possess blessings for lack of which others are famishing—that we profess to surrender all we have and are to His service—that, according to the established economy of the Gospel, His cause is to be extended through the world by human instrumentality.

We have endeavored to prove to you that you ought to be *systematically* benevolent—that reason and revelation require at least a tenth. Now we put the question seriously to your minds, what will you *do*? Rely upon it, it is not a matter of indifference, and it is become more important now than ever, because God, in His providence, has caused the subject to be brought, probably more fully than ever, before your minds; consequently guilt must be proportionably increased by disobedience. "The times of ignorance, God winks at," but when He gives the knowledge of His will, He requires obedience. "If I had not come and spoken unto them," said the Saviour, "they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin."† The Jews would have been much more guilty had they neglected the rebuilding of the temple, after the prophets had admonished them, and delivered to them the messages of God respecting it; and so shall we be left without excuse, if, knowing the will of God, we do it not.

Wilt thou, my hearer, hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God? All these blessings shall come upon thee; "Bles-

* Mal. iii. 10. 11.

† John xiv. 22.

sed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of the ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.”* But, if thou wilt not hearken to do all that He commands thee, then “all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee: cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field; cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.”†

* Deut. xxviii. 3—6.

† Deut. xxviii. 15—19.

Note.—The reader will perceive from the whole tenor of these sermons, that the author did not entertain the idea of a *reward for works*, in the sense of *merit*, due for their performance. Such merit no one would have been more ready to disclaim than himself. The following note has been furnished by a friend of the author, intimately acquainted with his views:—“There is another sense in which the hope of reward may be entertained without presumption by the Christian, and which, with propriety, may furnish him with powerful motives of action. “*Mérite*,” it is said in Hebrews xi. 26—“*had respect unto the recompense of reward*.” It is in this sense that the word is most properly though perhaps not most commonly used. “*Reward*,” it has been said,—“conveys no idea of obligation; whoever rewards, acts altogether optionally. What accrues to a man as the just consequence of his conduct, be it good or bad, is a reward.” The rewards of the righteous, are then the blessings which God of his free and unmerited goodness has connected with the life of faith in the Son of God,”—procured to us by his merits, not our own.”

SERMON XV.

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them; for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."—LUKE XI. 31.

The occasion of these words, was a request—or rather a demand—made by certain Jews on Christ, to show them a sign from heaven whereby they might certainly know that he was the Messiah.

They had indeed seen many signs—they had seen him raise the dead, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, but, they require something more. It must be a sign from *heaven*, by which they probably meant something like the glorious manifestation on Sinai. Unreasonable men! they had signs and wonders such as were never given before, and such as, perhaps, never will be given again—but it is not enough. Foolish men! they would fain see sights and hear sounds, before which their fathers trembled and quaked, and from which they earnestly entreated to be delivered. But our Saviour answered, "This is an evil generation; they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the son of man be to this generation." He reproves the *impenitent* by the example of the Ninevites, who "repented at the preaching of Jonas;" and the *unbelieving* by the example of the queen of the south, who

"came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon." "May we, instead of demanding further evidence of Christianity than the wisdom of God has seen fit to give, make it our care to hear and obey, and diligently improve the light we have received."

In discoursing upon the words of our text, we shall *first* notice those particulars in which the conduct of the queen of the south condemns the generality of men : and *secondly*, the points of encouragement which the narrative contains to those who earnestly seek the wisdom from above.

I. We are to notice the particulars in which the queen of the south condemns the generality of men. It has, unhappily, always been true of the great body of mankind, that they have been contemners of God and despisers of their own souls. In the days of Noah "God looked upon the earth and behold it was corrupt." "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes," says David, "because they keep not thy law."† And our Lord testifies that, in his time "few entered into the strait gate." Alas ! this is no less true still. Whilst civilization is extending, whilst the arts and sciences are perfecting, and human learning is pursued with unparalled avidity, Christianity advances with comparatively tardy steps ; the science of true godliness is little known or studied, and the "wisdom that comes from above" holds but a secondary place.

We beseech you seriously to consider this fact ; for, the idea once entertained that most are in the right way, is a deadly opiate to the soul. We at once conclude ourselves to be of the number without any evidence, and, of course, relax all exertions or anxiety, and "settle on our lees ;" whereas, if we apprehended the contrary fact, it might tend

* Gen. vi. 5. 12.

† Ps. cxix. 136.

to excite in our souls a wholesome alarm, lest the queen of the south should rise up in judgment with us and condemn us. We remark—

1st. The *faith* of this woman will condemn many. She heard the report and believed it: not indeed all she heard, but enough to determine her to undertake the journey. But “who hath believed our report” concerning a greater than Solomon? It is in vain that any pretend to believe “the record that God has given of His Son,” unless, like this queen, it has drawn them to the subject of the testimony—unless they are brought to Christ. She came to see for herself, so must we. It is not enough to know Christ by the hearing of the ear, we must see him, and look upon him, and handle him; we must “taste that the Lord is gracious”—i. e. there must be an application to him, that gives the soul an experimental knowledge of his mercy, truth and power.

It will not satisfy the true believer simply to *hear*. His language is, “Let thy work *appear* unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be *upon us*.”* That is, he will earnestly solicit, that the work of redeeming love may be more and more made known in its grace and efficacy to his soul; and that he may experience more fully the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit; that the beauty of holiness, and the joys of salvation, may be within him. Such a faith has the testimony and seal of God to its truth; all others, the “queen of the south will rise up and condemn.”

2d. She came without an invitation. She knew not what her reception would be; whether he would permit a Gentile stranger to enter into his presence—much more to hear his wisdom and learn of him. But she ventured upon

his goodness. She knew it was a part of true wisdom and goodness to condescend to those of low estate ; she therefore resolved to try ; she could but be refused.

Now, no ifs, and buts, and peradventures, stand between you and Christ. Every barrier is removed ; every wall of separation is broken down ; no doubt remains as to your reception. By commands, by promises, by entreaties, by instances of condescension, he labors to bring you to himself. What return do you make ? Is it so that he has called and ye have refused ? then, indeed, shall "the queen of the south rise up in judgment and condemn you ;" for, upon a mere report—without any encouragement—"she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon ;" but ye "turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

3d. She came in opposition to many difficulties :

A woman—burdened with the affairs of a nation—at an immense distance—must have seen many real difficulties, and might have feared a host of obstacles ; but, neither the feebleness of her sex, the business of the government, nor the greatness of the journey, were sufficient to appal her soul. She encountered, and encountering, surmounted them all. With her, "wisdom was the principal thing ; therefore she was determined at all hazards to "get wisdom."

Where is resolution like this ? Nay—less will suffice ; for no such obstacles lie in your way. "Hearken, oh, daughters, and consider !" Delicacy of sex is no impediment, it is rather favorable to the obtaining of true wisdom. No sacrifice is demanded but such as is for your interest to make. No tedious pilgrimage is to be performed, before you can reach the palace of our Solomon. "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven ? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) or, who shall descend into the deep ?

(that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But, the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.”* You need not go from place to place to seek Christ. “Lò ! He is with you.” Yea, “Behold ! He stands at the door and knocks :” He sues for admittance ; all that He asks is that you should open to Him, then will He enter and regale you with His grace and glory. There “He stands until His head is filled with dew ;” and you, perhaps, are making your excuses and thus putting contempt on the Lord who bought you. No wonder, if, at the last day, He should put greater honor on a Gentile queen than on such Christians. “Them that honor me, I will honor.”

4th. She came under many uncertainties. He might be dead ; or, she might not escape the hands of marauders, the pestilential winds, and the various dangers that infested an Arabian desert ; or, if she should, she might not at last be compensated for all the difficulties she had encountered.

But no such uncertainties lie in our way. Christ liveth for ever : and, as to realizing all that we expect or wish, there is not the shadow of a doubt. Angels and Archangels ! tell. Patriarchs and Apostles ! tell. Ye great cloud of witnesses ! tell. This they tell—“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”† In the present world, it is righteousness, peace, and joy ; and in the world to come, life everlasting.

Lastly. She came to see a man who was in no respect to be compared with Christ. We judge of the character and greatness of Solomon by the magnificence of his buildings, the splendor of his court, the arrangement and employment of his officers, and the wisdom of his laws. In all these respects, “a greater than Solomon is here.” Did the build-

* Rom. x. 6—8.

† 1 Cor. ii. 9.

ings of Solomon outrival all kindred works? Did "they reflect so bright and dazzling an effulgence," as Josephus tells us, "that the eye of the spectator was unable to endure the radiance?"

Who made the gold that glittered, and the precious stone that sparkled in the sun-beam? Who gave Solomon the wisdom to conceive, and the ability to execute designs so grand? Who but Christ, "by whom are all things, and for whom are all things?" This man then, is worthy of more glory than Solomon, "inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house."* Surely, "a greater than Solomon is here." Lift up your eyes to the house which He hath builded, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

" And golden worlds in that wide temple glow,
And roll in brightness through their orbits vast;
And then the future mingles with the past,
An unbeginning, an unending now."

Behold! then, the superior greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ in the superior glory of his residence.

We might draw an equally advantageous comparison, as regards the extent of their dominions, the dignity and virtue of those about their thrones, the splendor of their robes, the benevolence of their hearts. But we will content ourselves with that particular for which Solomon, among men, was pre-eminent. The glory of Solomon was his wisdom; but "Behold! a greater than Solomon is here." Solomon had a wise and understanding heart, so that there never was, and never shall be, a man like him. But, Christ has not only "the spirit of wisdom and understanding;" He is wisdom itself. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."† "He spake as never man spake;"

* Hebrews iii. 3.

† Col. ii. 3.

for, while Solomon spake of trees, and beasts, and creeping things, Christ spake of the secrets of the heart—the mysteries of heaven and eternity—and the “deep things” of God. And of this wisdom He is ready to impart; His heart is enlarged as the sand that is on the sea-shore; “He giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.”*

And now what excuse can ye offer for neglecting such a Saviour? “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and ye fools hate knowledge?” Surely if the queen of the south shall condemn men who did not profess to be Christ’s disciples and followers, “how much sorer will be the punishment,” of those, who, while they say, “I am the Lord’s,” and surname themselves by the name of Christ, yet show no love for His person, no zeal for His honor, no admiration of His glory, no desire to participate in His wisdom. Must they not expect to perish under an aggravated load of guilt?

She sat in darkness, with no light upon her path, save the twinkling of a feeble star in a distant land. To that land she came, and great was her reward. But, upon us, “through the tender mercy of our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us,” and the Sun of Righteousness hath arisen: and yet, under this meridian light, many obstinately close their eyes, “choosing darkness rather than light.”

Oh, my dear hearers! open your eyes to this light, lest that woman, who “came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, should rise up in judgment against you:” for “behold! a greater than Solomon is here.”

Are you making the wise resolve that you will go to Christ? O! let that resolution ripen into action while we exhibit

II. The encouragement that may be drawn from the nar-

* James i. 5.

rative for those who are earnestly seeking the wisdom which is from above.

The feelings of this woman strikingly correspond with the feelings of a sinner desiring "the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus;" and the success which attended her exertions bears a strong analogy to the result of a sinner's going to Christ. We may therefore, with the strictest propriety, view her case as at once reproving the slothful, and encouraging the returning penitent.

1st. She came perplexed, but returned with a mind fully satisfied.

It was the fame of Solomon concerning "the name of the Lord his God"—i. e. concerning his knowledge of the true God and His worship—that chiefly attracted her attention. Her object seems to have been, not so much to question him respecting things natural and civil, as concerning things divine. "She proved him with these hard questions" which had long perplexed her mind, and "he told her all." He answered every query, he satisfied every doubt, far beyond her highest expectations. "Thy wisdom," said she, "exceedeth the fame which I heard."

In like manner, when we first begin to attend seriously to religion, we have many perplexities to distress and harass us. It may be on some point of doctrine, or on some rule of action, or some train of experience. But let us take the Lord for our teacher, and every depth will be fathomed, every limit explored, and every "rough place be made plain."

My hearers, "follow on to know the Lord;" make Him your counsellor, and his word your guide, giving your increased knowledge a practical tendency, and the day will soon brighten, the clouds will soon disperse. Light will soon burst upon your soul, "like the clear shining of the sun after rain." But, remember, heavenly wisdom

comes not with a few lazy wishes. Like the queen of the south, we must seek it, and labor for it, and be willing to forsake all that we may obtain it: "then shall we understand righteousness, judgment and equity; yea, every good path;"* for, Christ is the "light of the world, and he that followeth Him shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

2nd. She came struggling in unbelief, but returned confirmed in faith. "I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me."† Or rather, it was with her as is common, faith was mingled with doubts. It was a great "report that she heard in her own land, of his acts and of his wisdom;" and no wonder that she could not fully believe it—the like had not been known in the world—but a little conference with the wise man dispersed all her doubts.

Faith in us, reaches not at once the standard of "full assurance." God indeed loves to be honored by receiving full credit for the report He has sent to us; and it is *by hearing* that faith first cometh. But, it is by communion with God—by unbosoming the soul to Him, and hearing Him speak to the soul, that the head of unbelief is bruised.

My hearers, depend upon it, there is no knowledge like that which is derived from experience. Rest not satisfied with the report that is brought to you by us. "Come see the man that can tell you all things." Come, hear the word by his Spirit. Come, receive out of the treasury of His grace "the unsearchable riches of Christ!" He who lives most in communion with God, will be most free from the assaults of unbelief.

3d. She found the reality exceeded the report she had heard. "When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's

* Prov. i. 9.

† 1 Kings x. 7.

wisdom, and the house he had built, &c., then was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, it was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. And behold the half was not told me."*

How strikingly analogous again are the two cases! When the Lord first shows himself gracious, when He turns again the captivity of His people, it puts such a pleasing surprise upon the soul, that they are like men who dream. Depend upon it, my hearers, that there are joys to be drawn from the fountain of divine knowledge which you cannot conceive until you taste, and which, when tasted—like the glorious Paul in vision saw—cannot, from the poverty of human language, be expressed. It is not enthusiasm, it is not hyperbole, when we speak in language the most glowing, with warmth the most extatic, of the blessedness to be enjoyed in the favor of God; and if you are brought to experience it for yourselves, you will be constrained to confess that "it exceeds the fame you had heard of it." And oh! if the streams thus far from their source are so sweet, so enlivening, what must they be at the fountain head? If God shows himself so glorious in these earthly sanctuaries, what will the vision be when no veil intercepts? one may imagine a disembodied Spirit to "fall down as dead" on the first glance of the divine glory. The half—no, nor the ten thousandth part cannot be told of that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Happy, thrice happy, O blessed Jesus! "are thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom."†

Lastly, we remark for your encouragement, that she reaped immense advantage from her journey. She came with an offering, and returned with a blessing; for "King Solomon gave her all her desire, whatsoever she asked,

* 1 Kings x. 4. 5. 7.

† 1 Kings x. 8.

besides that which he gave her of his royal bounty."* In like manner we are not to appear empty-handed before God. We can bring nothing as a price for our salvation, but He requires us to make a full surrender of all that we have and are to Him. Our *time* must be given to Him—while "we live, we must live unto the Lord." Our *talents* must be given to Him—so that we must be willing to spend and be spent in His service. Our *property* must be given to Him for the advancement of His cause. Our *hearts* must be given Him. Not that He absolutely needs them, but because He has so arranged the economy of His kingdom, that our time, our talents, our property, our hearty co-operation, are made necessary to build it up—to give glory to His reign—and especially, as a token of fidelity to Him, and attachment to His cause. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."† Rely upon it you will be no losers. "Ask what ye will and it shall be given unto you." "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."‡

Did Solomon's servants partake of the benefits of his wisdom? Whoso comes to Christ comes to the very source of wisdom, and has from Him the light of life." Did they enjoy with Him the peace of His kingdom? "The kingdom of God is righteousness, and *peace*, and joy in the Holy Ghost."§ Did they participate in his glory and were they blessed with his blessings? "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house."|| "But we all, with open face beholding as

* 1 Kings. x. 13.

† Rom. xii. 1.

‡ Luke xviii. 29. 30.

§ Rom. xiv. 17.

|| Ps. lxxxiv. 4.

in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."*

And now, my hearers, what will you do? oh! be persuaded to come at once to this divine Teacher. Let the hope of blessedness influence you. "Come, see how good the Lord is." But if you will not, then remember how inexcusable you are to neglect privileges so precious—to abuse advantages so great. Perhaps you think you have come to him. A very short argument will determine the matter.

The salvation of the soul is either the *supreme* object of our pursuit, or it is not at all in view. That which is supreme with us, not only maintains the chief place in our thoughts, but secures to itself the consecration of all our faculties, and swallows up all minor objects, except so far as they promote the great end in view. Look at the man struggling for life—the covetous laboring for riches—the ambitious aspiring after fame—and learn how the individual who aims at life everlasting, at riches which endure forever, at honor which cometh from above, labors to obtain the prize. Have you taken the same pains to obtain the wisdom from above, that the queen of the south did to "hear the wisdom of Solomon?" You have not? The inference is irresistible; you have disregarded Him who is greater than Solomon, and "the queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with you and condemn you."

O! think what shame and confusion of face will cover you at the bar of God, if you are then confronted by a pagan queen, who came upon a vague report, without an invitation, notwithstanding the delicacy of her sex, the dangers of the way, and the cares of a kingdom, under many doubts and uncertainties, to see and to hear the wisdom of

Solomon ; and lo ! a greater than Solomon is here ; and no such doubts and difficulties and uncertainties obstruct your path, and yet you will not come.

Brethren, will you be influenced by neither shame nor blessedness, by rewards nor punishments, by the smiles nor the frowns of God ? Behold ! “I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west”—Ninevites and Arabians, Hottentots and Indians, Mahomedans and Pagans, —“and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom”—those who are within the bonds of the covenant, and in the pale of the Christian Church—“shall be cast out into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

* Matt. vii. 11. 12.

FRAGMENTS.

FRAGMENTS.

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE.

Every Christian is placed in a centre, of which the globe is the circumference, and each must fill that circumference, as every star forms a centre and shines through the whole sphere, and yet all meet and mingle, forming one vast field of light:—or, as in many well-tuned instruments, each moves every particle of the surrounding air, and yet strikes every ear, in one harmonious sound.

CONSCIENCE.

Natural conscience dictates the propriety of acting according to right and wrong, but natural conscience gives not the rule of right and wrong. It is as blind a guide in morals, as in doctrine. Itself needs illumination, and then it acts the part of a faithful monitor, when we turn to the right hand and when we turn to the left, saying, "this is the way, walk ye in it." Man without a conscience, is a machine without a regulator; sometimes too fast, sometimes too slow, and seldom right. Conscience without a divine light, is like a dial without the sun; a shade, a blank, a useless instrument.

THE LAW OF GOD.

His commandments are exceeding broad, like the great and wide arms of the sea, extending to all our thoughts, motives, and desires, and like a chain reaching from the cradle to the grave, yea, into eternity itself; for there never was a moment, since we became rational and intelligent creatures, when we were without the law; and there never will be a period, when we shall be independent of God's word; for, when it shall have accomplished the work, which God sent it to perform in the lower world,—when, like the star in the east, it shall have led Jew and Gentile to the place where Jesus is,—there, it will stand and forever shine upon the intelligent creation; “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.” Angels “do His commandments and hearken to the voice of His word.”

* * * * *

We must search the Scriptures and study to know the will of God, and then we must implicitly submit to, and implicitly obey that will: not because it meets our views, or interests, or natural feelings, but because God commands it. The motive is not less important than the deed. “A man,” says Archbishop Leighton, “may think that he does the will of God in some things, when it is but by accident, because the letter of the commandment is coincident with his own will, and so it is not the will of God, but his own will that moves him. A covetous man condemns the prodigality of his lavish son, and the son cries out against the avarice of his niggardly father, and thus both seem to condemn sin, but the truth is, neither do it.” A Jehu may cry, “Come see my zeal for the Lord,” and he accomplishes the Lord's purposes because it is the way to the throne, “but Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart.”

JEHOVAH JIREH.

"*The Lord will provide.*" It implies *notice*. There are those who imagine that they compliment the Almighty, by supposing Him too great to notice such insignificant worms of the dust as men. But they have never told us how large the object must be to secure His providential regard. Offer such a compliment to "*thy governor; will he be pleased?*" Do we not acknowledge *him* best fitted to fill the highest station, who possesses a mind comprehensive enough to grasp the minutest concerns, and diligent enough to take cognizance of the minutest cog in the machinery of political economy? "*Will a man, then, rob God?*" Will he say, that he is great above all gods, and, then, for all the interests of our race, make him useless as gods of wood and stone? If He does not notice the creature He has made, the neglect puts dishonor upon His wisdom and His works. It is to say that, they were worth making, but not worth preserving. It is to say that, he creates, as children blow up bubbles, and then tosses them from His hand, the sport of every wind that blows. Be this the god of the sceptic. Our God is almighty to create, and all-wise to regard. "The eye of the Lord is in every place." Yea, he numbers "the very hairs of our head."

* * * * *

Many are the evils to which we are exposed. God sees and notices them all, and pities us under them. He orders their extent and duration. If a child who is the joy of a parent's heart, is torn away by the hand of death,—He calls for the sacrifice. If the tongue of slander endeavors to sully the reputation,—He orders it. If sickness invades our frame, or loss of property overwhelms us in dispondency and gloom, His hand hath done it. But, it is, as a father corrects his

son. There is a blessing in it, and at the end of the appointed days, he removes the clouds of sorrow from us, or us from them. He gives us as happy an issue out of all our afflictions, as he did to Abraham. Therefore, let your course be onward, though you go weeping as you go. There is a monument before you, to encourage your faith and hope in God. Are you passing through deep and troubled waters?—it rises above the waves. And through the flames?—they light up the inscription,—JEHOVAH JIREH. Or under a cloud?—it is seen in the cloud, like the bow of a gracious covenant. Or through the valley of the shadow of death?—if a mountain like Sinai, forms one side thereof, a mountain like Calvary, forms the other, and on it the cross, with this inscription in Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, and in the language of every nation, JEHOVAH JIREH,—the Lord will provide.”

Psalm cvii. 7—“HE LED THEM FORTH BY THE RIGHT WAY.”

“Those here referred to, are denominated *the redeemed of the Lord*”—verse 2. Not only has the Lamb been slain for them, to render redemption possible; but, by faith, they have kept the Passover. By faith, they have applied the blood of sprinkling. By faith, they have passed from the house of their bondage, broken their chains, and placed themselves under a new leader, new laws, new government.

* * * * *

These are they who are led forth “*by the right way*.” It may be a long, dark, dangerous, and intricate way, but it is “right;” right to prove their hearts, to prepare them for the inheritance, and to display the wisdom, power, and

goodness of God. Who does not see how the wisdom and goodness are shown in leading about His people through the wilderness? Who sees not how necessary the training and discipline were, to fit them for independence and wealth? Instantaneous emancipation from slavery; sudden acquisition of cities, and olive-yards, and vineyards; rapid and complete victory over enemies, would, in the nature of things, have flushed them with pride, and caused them to forget the Lord who redeemed them.

Just so, were the Christian borne on the full tide of prosperity, his sails would soon swell with pride, and he would inevitably make shipwreck of his faith. The wilderness way, entangled, and gloomy, and dangerous, and long as it is, is the best way.

This is the point we wish to bring you to see. You are chosen, it may be, in the furnace of affliction. Was ever gold purified, but in the furnace?

Poverty may be your lot;—you began life with fair prospects, but your projects failed; your schemes are blasted; friends prove false. You form other schemes. They fail. You change your residence or your calling; still the dark cloud hangs over you, and it is right. Possibly you are afflicted with domestic troubles. Your children are taken from you, one by one; or, what is worse, they are spared to bring your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; or, you have trials of temper and patience from the quarter whence you might look for indulgence and comfort,—and it is right.

You may be subjected to persecution. Your own familiar friend has lifted up his heel against you. You are held up to public odium. You have received a stab in the tenderest part, your reputation. Perhaps you never can recover from it in the estimation of those, whose esteem you value,—and it is right.

Or, disease may be your lot. You are incapacitated for usefulness. You are a burden to yourself and to those around you. Now, you have the prospect of release in death—and again you are driven out to sea, to endure other buffetings on the tempestuous ocean of life, and your poor bark seems to be sustained, only to bear another and another shock ;—and it is right.

Or, it may be, that your trials are entirely of a spiritual character. Clouds and darkness are round about you. The candle of the Lord, shines not upon you ; no joy ; no peace ; scarce a ray of hope breaks in upon your troubled soul. You are harassed with continual doubts. You have no assurance ; no witness of the spirit. In short the Lord leads you in a way that almost leads you to despair. All this has befallen thousands, and yet it is right. It is the way of God's choosing. It is the right way. It is the very way that is necessary for you to travel ; to kill sin within you ; to wean you from the world ; to bring you to acquiescence in his will ; to perfect patience ; to make you meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light ; to display God's wisdom, power, and goodness to save to the uttermost. Had not Abraham been required to sacrifice Isaac, he had not known how the Lord could provide. Had not Joseph been exiled from his father's house, God's watchful care of his people had not been so signally displayed. Had not Job been so sorely tried, Satan had not been so baffled. His patience had not shed such a lustre through all succeeding ages of the Church. His latter end had not been so greatly blessed. Had not Paul been afflicted with a thorn in the flesh, which probably never was extracted until he found relief in death, he had not proved so fully the sufficiency of divine grace.

Not one of those who had trial of cruel mockings and

scourgings, bonds and imprisonment, who were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, had one trial, or strife, or stone, or bond too much. All, in measure, weight, extent and duration were right.

Psalm lxxviii. 25.—“MAN DID EAT ANGEL’S FOOD.”

I feel a something within me which testifies that there is a determinate good, in possession of which my mind would be fully satisfied and at perfect rest. But what that *something* is, defies all the labor, research, and ingenuity of man to discover, unaided by the light of heaven in the volume of inspiration.

I asked the *sick*! He told me that it lay in health. Health lighted up its crimson glow and mantled in his cheek, but it was not there.

I asked the *poor*! He told me it lay in riches. I saw him add field to field and house to house, and heap up gold and silver without measure. But it was not there. They were not riches without sorrow.

I asked the *ambitious*. He said it lay in *honor*. I saw fame entwine many a chaplet around his brow, but it was not there. Every rose had its thorn.

I asked the *young*. He said there was nothing better than that a young man should rejoice in his youth. But a voice came from heaven and cried, “know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”

They fluttered from object to object, but they were beguiled by shadows. They spread their sails to the wind, but a transient meteor directed their course. They bent their bow and sent their arrow on its swiftest wing, but they had no better object in view than a gaudy bubble,

blown up by a vain imagination "from the froth of their own vain hearts," which vanished with the gentlest touch. All these were found liars unto me.

Fearful, lest in a matter of such importance, my own observation might deceive me, —I inquired from the aged. Not one could say, "I have found it;—here it is."

At last I betook me to the man who had wisdom, and riches, and honor, such as mortal never before, nor since enjoyed. He told me that he had taken an inventory of the world, and all the best things in it; he had cast up the account, and the sum total was vanity.

Impelled onward in my research, and directed by grace, I repaired to the fountain of all knowledge, the sacred Scriptures. There I learned that heaven is a happy place, and that angels are happy beings, that man, in his superior nature, is akin to angels; like them spiritual, immortal and divine, and must eat angels' food, that is, be constituted happy as angels are.

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But what constitutes them thus happy? What is the source of this unmingled pleasure? Not their power. Fallen angels are powerful. Not their immortality. Apostate spirits are immortal. Not their activity. Devils are active too, but they are not happy.

Here lies the disparity—those are *holy*, these are *un-holy*. From sin, the latter derive all their gloom, and sorrow, and despair: but holiness is the well-spring, whence the former draw all their pleasure and delight. They are *seraphs*, i. e. *burning ones*, having minds enkindled with an intense and eternal flame of divine love. They are *living ones*; living to the best of all purposes,—the honor and glory of their great Original. They are winged creatures flying, like lightning, to discharge the will of God.

Their love, their praise, their obedience, their perfect image and likeness of God is their happiness. The connection is inseparable. Indeed no union between any cause and effect is so necessary, as this between holiness and happiness.

HUMILITY.

The humble man measures himself, not by the lowest, but by the highest. He thinks not of what he is, but of what he ought to be. And though possessed of the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Sampson, the honor of David, and the eloquence of Apollos; he would still feel, that there was enough to humble him. He asks, what have I that I did not receive? He feels that he always was, and always must be a dependent creature. Men talk of being independent, but the humble man is conscious that there is only one independent Being in the universe. He feels that he is not only dependent upon God, but on the very slave that trembles under his rod. Without the poor man's toil, he cannot be a man of ease and leisure; he cannot roll in luxury or wealth; he can neither eat nor drink.

He feels that he holds his riches by a feeble tenure; therefore, he neither trusts in them, nor boasts of them. The conflagration of a night; the mortality of a day; the mildew of a summer; a breath of wind, may destroy his mansions, blast his fields, rob him of his flocks, carry off his servants, and leave him, like Job, the occupant of a dungbill. A competitor may pluck off his wealth; a fever may prostrate his gigantic mind, and leave him, like Nebuchadnezzar, a fit companion for the beasts of the field.

But admitting that all these should live, and grow, and flourish to his latest hour, the sense he entertains of himself as a sinner, is enough to keep him humble. It is this, which enables him to comply with the otherwise hard precept, *to esteem others better than himself*. With Job, he feels himself vile ; with Isaiah, a man of unclean lips ; with Paul, he carries a load of corruption, whilst the sins of others are in a measure concealed from his view. Hence he sinks in his own esteem, and is "*clothed with humility*."

THE ROBE OF HUMILITY.

Let it be your outer garment. Let it cover all your other virtues. Not that they are to be neglected, but not cultivated "to be seen of men."

Have you knowledge in science, natural or divine ? Throw over it the mantle of humility.

Is the meed of praise awarded for some noble and disinterested deed of benevolence or condescension ? Put on the garment of humility. Endeavor that the left hand know not what the right hath done. If that cannot be, humble yourself under the consideration that Christ came from a greater distance, and descended from a greater height, on an errand of mercy to you.

Have you exercised a spirit of forgiveness ? Think of your indebtedness to pardoning mercy, and long forbearance for your exemption from bitter punishment and vindictive wrath, and so "*be clothed with humility*."

Thus should the Christian act as regards every thing in which there is any praise ; and if he could—if it were consistent with his Christian character, he should conceal his very humility. But it is his robe, his outer garment. Not the long robe of the hypocrite, with broad phylacteries

floating in the wind, to catch the eye of every passenger. It is the modest apparel of the meek-hearted. It makes no glare, and attracts but little attention, but in the sight of God it is of great price. It is an ornament—a precious ornament. Men may call it a mean spirit; but it is highly valued of God. It brings with it every other blessing that is worth enjoying. “*By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honor, and life.*”

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This garment being exposed to many snares, and defilements, must be carefully guarded and retained around us. “*Be clothed with humility.*” Gather it, and tie, or gird it on, as Easterns are accustomed to gather up their long, flowing robes, when laboring, or performing a journey. We are traveling a road, all grown over with briars and brambles, where, without care, our humility will be rent, and torn from us. It is of a delicate texture, and is easily rent. In its native purity, it is white as snow, and may soon be polluted. Indeed, we shall find that it often needs renewing and cleansing.

A little accession of wealth, soon swells the mind with vanity; prompts us to cast off our robe, and array ourselves in the vestments of mammon—pride and self-conceit.

Honor that comes from man, and humility, are rarely seen together. A puff of popular applause, often divests us of our chief ornament. A literary wreath; yea, beauty,—“a flower blasted by a thousand accidents;”—dress, which the worm or the brute wore long before, and which the ignoble may wear in common with the noble: and family extraction, as if a wise man might not beget a fool, and as if the savage were not his kinsman—all have a tendency

to mar humility and intoxicate the spirits with pride. We may go further and say, that pride makes even grace, and the blessings of heaven a snare.

Hezekiah's heart was never so much lifted up, as when he had received a wonderful deliverance. Paul was never in so much danger of being exalted above measure, as when he had been "caught up to the third heavens;" and perhaps Peter's fall was occasioned by his self-confident boasting.

CHRIST OUR KING.

He calls himself our Shepherd, Physician, Father, Friend; but add to these this one, our King, and how it advances their value and importance. It gives divinity to humanity, and thus qualifies him by the union of the two natures, to be our Saviour.

A SHEPHERD KING can, by his holy arm, conquer Satan, destroy death, and redeem our souls from hell. A SOVEREIGN PHYSICIAN can heal every wound, and pour the oil of joy into every bleeding heart. A ROYAL FATHER can give us a kingdom for our inheritance; and A DIVINE FRIEND will ever have his eye upon us for good, and open his ear to our cry.

CHRIST THE MORNING STAR.

Though Christ is denominated a star, it does not denote inferiority; for he is "*the express image of the Father.*" If he appear on earth in less splendor, it is not because he is lower in his perfections, but from compassion to our weakness.

That star which shines with little more than glow-

worm brightness, is, in another sphere, a sun, enlightening and animating other globes, as our sun does this. So Christ seated on the throne of his glory, is equal with the Father. He who has seen a fixed star has seen a sun, and he who has seen Christ, has seen the Father also. In contemplating Christ, of necessity we contemplate God, for he is "the brightness of the Father's glory."

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Every parable that he spake, every miracle he wrought, every discourse he delivered, was an additional ray of evangelical light. The morning star, seemed indeed to set in blood, but soon it burst from the clouds again, in increased splendor, ascending to its zenith, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel.

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When Christ dawns upon the soul by his word and spirit, then a new day begins, as widely different from our former state,—yea, even admitting that we have a theoretical knowledge of the truth,—as law and gospel, night and day, darkness and light. Yon sun was no instrument of light to the man born blind, until Jesus anointed his eyes, and he washed and came seeing; and what is this gospel to us, until sight, that is, spiritual intellect, is restored to the soul?

"Tis midnight with my soul, till he,
Bright Morning Star, bid darkness flee."

But when the shades are chased away before the brightness of his rising, a new world opens upon the astonished soul. Old things pass away. All things become new. Those which once charmed, charm no more. Trifles no longer please. Earth's pleasures afford no content.

When the thick film which obstructs the moral sight, is removed, then evangelical light penetrates the understanding, and finds access to the heart. Those truths which reason could not scan, are easily apprehended by the eye of faith. The man begins to see with precision the great doctrines of the Gospel, and he discovers a beauty and harmony in the economy of the Gospel, and in the attributes of the Deity, where all was once, to his mind, an inextricable snare. He sees here, mercy and truth meet together, here righteousness and peace embrace each other; in other words, how God can maintain his justice, and yet justify the sinner.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REDEMPTION AND ATONEMENT.

It may be asked, why are not all men saved? We answer, that though the provision, in Christ, is *sufficient* for all, yet it is not *efficient* to all, because it is limited in its application;—limited by the unbelief of man. Opposition to God, impenitence and unbelief, are the only obstacles in the way of the salvation of any. There is mercy enough in the Father, but men will not touch the extended sceptre of his pardon. There is life enough in Christ, but they will not come to him and live. There is grace enough in the Spirit, but they will not seek it in prayer.

Atonement is *general*, but redemption, which is atonement applied, is *particular*, Atonement is *for* sin; redemption is *from* sin. This distinction will appear to possess a propriety, and that it is not a nice, metaphysical distinction, by the simple remark that “we may pray for redemption, but we cannot pray for atonement.”

Atonement makes salvation possible; redemption

makes it sure. Just as the shedding of the blood of the paschal lamb, made the preservation of Israel's first-born possible; the application of it to the door posts of the houses, made it sure.

This distinction between atonement and redemption, possesses more importance than may at first sight appear. It nullifies the doctrine of universal salvation, grounded on the doctrine of infinite satisfaction; the advocates of which say, that as Christ died for all, so all must be saved.

If the atonement is to be regarded as a *remedy* or *provision*, then, its efficacy depends upon its application. The serpent on the pole, was a sufficient remedy for every wounded Israelite, but its efficacy depended on looking.

There was a sufficiency provided at the marriage supper for all the invited guests, but only those who accepted the invitation, partook of the feast. So the atonement made by Christ, is sufficient for the world, but its efficacy depends upon repentance and faith, and then it becomes redemption. In this distinction, lies the foundation of necessity on the sinner's part, of application to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."—Hos. xiv. 5.

How beautiful the picture! How precious the promise! What so gentle and refreshing as the dew of heaven? What so fair as the full blown lily? What so firm as the deep rooted cedar? And yet, these are but faint representations of the comforting influences of the Spirit; the comeliness which Christ puts upon his people, and the stability which they derive from his faithfulness. They are great, incomparably great, beyond all hyperbole and all conception.

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The lily is rapid in its growth. So the grace of God sometimes carries on the work of sanctification very fast, in the young convert's heart. But it is the characteristic of every Christian, that he does grow. The grace of God is not bestowed on him in vain. Where it is planted, and watered by his hand, it must increase. None who have received the grace of God, will be satisfied with the measure they have received. They will not be satisfied with present attainments. Onward! Onward! is their motto.

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Let the lily be exposed to the scorching sun, and deprived of the refreshing dew, and its leaves will droop and die. Just so the Christian; let him be exposed to the scorching heat of indwelling corruption, the world's cares, and Satan's wiles, without the dew of God's grace, he will not advance in holiness of heart and life. But when that descends, his leaves stand erect, and like the lily, his growth is rapid. Integrity strengthens, benevolence expands, holiness opens in all its lily-like loveliness, and in due time the plant is removed to the Paradise of God, there to bloom in unfading beauty.

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"He shall cast forth his roots as Lebanon." Here the figure changes from the lily to the cedar. Blessed be God, that while there are points of resemblance between the Christian and that delicate flower, there is a dissimilarity also. It is the privilege of the Christian, to be unlike the lily in the duration of its verdure and its bloom; but like the cedar of Lebanon, to shoot forth his roots so as not to be shaken from his hold, by blasts and storms.

The lily grows fast, but it soon fades. It is easily plucked up. Therefore, while the Christian is like the

queen of flowers in his growth, he is like the prince of trees in his stability; as the cedar of Lebanon, which strikes its root so deep, and cleaves with such tenacity to its native soil, that it can be plucked up by no human arm.

This denotes the security which the believer has in the faithfulness of God, and the stability which he acquires by growth in grace and in the knowledge of God.

By renewed acts of faith, he becomes so rooted and grounded in Christ, that all the winds and storms of sin, Satan and the world, can never move his strong hold on Christ.

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Let us remember where our security lies. The Gospel teaches us, that it lies in union with Christ, and in the immutability of his love. It would be a reproach to his Omnipotency, if *that* should be vanquished, which his arm supported. It would argue unaccountable versatility in the divine mind, to plant and then to pluck up. But means must be used for our establishment in grace; for God does not preserve by mere force, but by rational means. And yet he leaves not the success barely to the operations of our own minds, but secures the result by the power of his Spirit.

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Whilst the well-watered soul takes deep root, his foliage extends. His branches shall spread. It is true, spiritual growth consists principally in those things which are not seen by the eye of man; but when the hidden graces of humility, faith, patience, and love increase, he naturally advances in holiness of life. True religion is of an aspiring nature, continually reaching towards heaven. Its root is low, but its top is high, like a tree planted by the rivers of waters.

GOD'S MINISTERS TO KNOW NO MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

It is of the last importance, that God's minister should know and exhibit, the character of those to whom he is sent. He preaches to man as a lost sheep—a sinner, bewildered in ignorance and error.

Distinctions are indeed made among these wanderers from the fold of God, as rulers and subjects; rich and poor; refined and rude; learned and ignorant; bond and free; civilized and savage. But we "*know no man after the flesh.*" We recognise them, one and all, as the apostate children of an apostate head. Were I to preach to an assemblage of kings, in their kingly robes, or to a congregation of philosophers, who had squared their lives by the strictest rules, I could address them only as lost sheep.

ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH.

Calvinism and Armenianism are things with which we, as Protestant Episcopalians, have nothing to do. It is our happiness to belong to a Church, which has just enough of the former to ascribe the whole of salvation to the free grace of God; and just enough of the latter, to leave every man altogether without an excuse. We feel happy in the reflection, that the evangelical articles of our Church, unfettered by system, give a more scriptural exhibition of divine truth, than is to be found in any words which man's wisdom ever devised. While minute enough to exclude all damnable heresies, they are not so minute as to strain the conscience of any good man; nor to distract and divide good men, who cannot yet see eye to eye. They are emphatically *catholic*.

JOB IN HIS AFFLICTION.

In the beginning of his sorrows he worshipped God, the very reverse of what the adversary anticipated when he said "*touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*" He took away all, and instead of cursing God to his face, "*he fell down upon the ground and worshipped.*" The moment he put on his mourning weeds, that moment he put himself in a posture of adoration. The rent mantle and the prostrate body, were but outward expressions of inward humility and reverence. If one eye was fixed on his sorrows the other was full fixed upon the hand that sent them.

Here is no arraignment of his providence; no finding fault with his dispensations. He can still acknowledge his divinity, adore his majesty, and celebrate his perfections; and thus he quenches the fiery darts of the tempter.

Oh! what a reproof is this, to those who refuse to go up to the house of God, because the hand of God has been heavy upon them! How often have we known individuals to absent themselves from the sanctuary, because they have lost a friend, or been plunged into the deep waters of some domestic calamity! Nay, the grief has been so inordinate, that it has even interrupted private devotion. Whereas, the very design of affliction is to bring us nearer to God;—and the more He chastens, the more should we call upon His holy name.

If Jacob, in his father's tent, joined in the morning and evening sacrifice; Jacob banished from his home, with the cold ground for his couch, and a hard stone for his pillow, must wrestle all night with God. If Daniel called upon his God, three times a day, in his own chamber;—in the lion's den he must not cease to worship Him.

THE LAW OF GOD AND THE LAW OF NATURE.

This law was originally written on man's heart, but sin has defaced it ;—it is therefore re-written in the Bible. And here, let it be noted, that the *law of nature*, as it is called by rationalists, and the law of God, are in no respects variant,—no more than light emanating from a glow-worm, and light emanating from the sun are diverse. Light is the same element however it may be produced. There are not two principles of right and wrong. The law is one, though one copy be written on the heart, another on tables of stone, and a third in a scroll or book. The law of God and the law of nature run in parallel lines. The one is as straight, and as long, and as broad as the other ; only one is brighter and more distinct than the other. They give sanction to each other. I find nothing in the Book of Nature, that is not in the Bible, and nothing in the Bible that may not be traced upon the pages of conscience and reason.

PENALTY OF THE LAW.

What that penalty is, we must learn from the lawgiver. We read that too faintly in the volume of nature ; plainly in the volume of inspiration. Nature tells that every law must have a penalty, or it is no law. Reason tells us, that under no government, human or divine, ought it to be, as with the just, so with the unjust. Fact confirms, what reason suggests. We see God's curse upon transgression, in the thorns and briars of life, in the earthquake and tornado, in famine and disease, in the winding-sheet, the coffin and the grave, in all the ills and miseries to which humanity is heir. As there is no law without penalty, so, under a good government,

there is no penalty inflicted but for law violated. Death is the wages of sin. But as the law is but faintly transcribed in the volume of nature, so also is the penalty. When, indeed, all the facts shall be before us ; when the drama is closed ; when the great Governor deals to every one according to his deeds, then we shall see the full deserts of sin. Till then, we must have recourse to His Word.

MAN'S INABILITY TO KEEP THE LAW.

But you say that man is disabled and cannot keep the whole law, and therefore God will not be so rigorous. If God had disabled him ;—or, if he has lost the faculty and retained the disposition, there might be some force in the reasoning. But seeing that he has sold himself to work iniquity, and seeing that his inability lies in his will and affections, and not in his faculties, the reasoning loses all its weight. “ *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*” Not because it has lost its power. It is as vigorous as ever. Christ does indeed say, “ No man can come unto me except the Father draw him : ”—and in another place, He shows that this inability lies in a stubborn will,—“ Ye will not come : ” and in another, He places it in the affections which govern the will ; “ the world hateth me, *because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.* ”

Suppose, by way of illustration, that a child be a maniac or a paralytic, we all see that he would not then be subject to parental authority. But, suppose his madness to be in the heart ; and suppose him to put in a plea for a mitigated parental law, in other words, to say outright, that which is only concealed truth,—Father I dislike you and your authority so much ; my affections are so alienated from you, that

I cannot honor you ; but still I claim your affection, and favor, and estate, on the ground that the commands ought to be mitigated to suit my inability. Would that excuse, or that claim be admitted ?

The amount of the argument is, that obligation diminishes, as depravity deepens, and so angels who are perfectly holy are bound by a perfect law : men who are far gone from original righteousness, are partially bound by the law : and devils who are sunk to the lowest depths of depravity, are completely exonerated from all obligations. "O syren song" to men whose hearts are desperately wicked !

I go not too far, and with reverence I say it, that God cannot mitigate His own law, because it would be to invade His own holiness. Positive laws, i. e., those which concern outward observances, as the Sabbath and the Sacraments, He can mitigate or annul, but the moral law, which emanates from the divine nature, He will not, cannot change, unless He can change His divine nature.

This prop of a "mitigated law," will not stand either on the ground of Scripture or of reason. Reason would blush to say, that drunkenness exonerates a man from the law of chastity, which it does, if the above assumption that depravity has a right to a dispensation from a perfect law, be true, and the Bible says, "He that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law." Weighed in its balance, all the world is found wanting, and the sentence is Mene, Upharsin ;—"Thy days are numbered, and thy kingdom is taken from thee." But thank God, though the law cannot be mitigated, the kingdom can be restored, and we may yet reign as kings for ever and ever. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "That which the law cannot do in that it is weak, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the right-

eousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

THE THREE GREAT ENEMIES.

As soon as man was made, Satan sought his ruin. As soon as Christ was born, a design was formed for His destruction. As soon as the soul begins to think, and act, the flesh twines its lusts around it. And as soon as man is born again, and Christ is formed in the heart, and the immortal part begins to feel its dignity and value ; so soon these three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, begin to exert their wiles, and lay their snares, to accomplish the destruction of the gracious principle ; and as of old, so now, with the pretence that they seek our good. The one would have you to be "as gods." The other will pretend that it would worship with you ; and the third will plead the necessities of life. But all will seek your ruin. The world will invite you to a little of its sweets, and they seem to be very sweet. The devil will suggest that it is too soon. The flesh will say, spare thyself ; so much strictness is not necessary. Each will allow you a little religion, as a kind of opiate ; but all will cry moderation, by which, in truth, is meant that spirit of lukewarmness, which is the abomination of Almighty God.

THE GOSPEL THE POWER OF GOD.

It is said to be the power of God "unto salvation." The power of God is in it, more than in the word that gave existence to the sun, and moon ; more than in the law and its thunders that roared on Sinai ; more than in the word, at which the departed soul was summoned back from the

world of spirits to its clayey tenement, and new life infused into the putrid frame of Lazarus ; more than will be displayed, when all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.

It is a greater and more marvellous exhibition of divine power, to regenerate and save a soul, than to produce something out of nothing ; or to roll suns, and stars, and comets, through their vast orbits, and maintain them there ; or to break the slumbers of the dead of all ages. This is the word and the work that proclaims Him the Lord God Omnipotent.

I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY.

Could life be spun out forever, it would forever be a chequered scene :—a life of lights and shadows ;

“ With drops of joy, and draughts of ill between ;”—

an eternal succession of hopes and fears ; desires and disappointments ; efforts and failures ; pleasures and sorrows.

But not for such reasons does the Christian, with Job, exclaim, “ I would not live alway.” Were these all, it might savor of discontent with the dispensations of God’s providence ; of weariness with the world, rather than of abstraction from it ; of a desire of ease, rather than to be with Christ, all which might characterize the most selfish, sensual, and worldly-minded.

We have seen sufferers crying for death, who had no hope for hereafter. They desire to pass from time into eternity, simply because they feel the evils of the present, but apprehend not the miseries of the future. And this is the secret of the calmness, and composure, and willingness to die, which is often seen in individuals, who have no an-

chor cast upon the Rock Christ Jesus. For such to say "I would not live alway," is to wish to exchange the burnings of a fever for a fire that cannot be quenched.

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The Christian has much to gladden his heart, therefore he hates not life. But he has much to embitter it, and therefore he would not prolong it one thread beyond its appointed bounds. His language is,—

"Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
Life much; but rather how I may be quit
Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge."

He is forgiven, but a cloud sometimes passes over him. He is delivered from the love of sin, but at times he falls. He is safe under the shadow of Jehovah's wings, but the lion roars against him, and occasionally, by Divine permission, he is sifted in the sieve of affliction.

Who would *prefer* exposure to clouds, and rain, and the lightning's shafts? Who would wish always to be on the ocean, exposed to the storm, and the gaping waters, though in the most gallant ship? Who would be a combatant, always to run, and wrestle, or fight, and never receive the prize? Who would continue ever in a state of probation, and never have the case decided? Not the Christian! The criminal going to the place of execution may think the hour a moment; the mile a step; the slow procession, the furious driving of a Jehu. He may wish the journey would never end. But the Christian has hopes and expectations which make him rather cry—When shall I be there? "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

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Shall I tell you what the Christian expects death to

bring him ? He expects it to bring the realization of all his dearest anticipations. He expects it to bring him to the enjoyment of richer knowledge and holiness, than all the saints of all ages, have ever known upon earth. He expects it to re-unite him to those, whose loss has occasioned him so many tears. He hopes when he lands on the happy shore, to receive the congratulations of those he loved on earth ; with whom he held sweet fellowship, and went to the house of God. He expects to know those he never knew before ; the winged cherub ; the flaming seraph ; the glorious company of the apostles ; the goodly fellowship of the prophets, from Enoch down to John ; the noble army of martyrs, from righteous Abel to the last valiant soldier of the cross, who shall die for Christ ; in short, the whole Church of God, redeemed from every nation and people under heaven. He expects to be made a member of the family of God ; to be brought to God, the Father of all ; to union with Him, to knowledge of Him, conformity with Him, and to the enjoyment and participation of His grace and glory.

TRUE AND FALSE REPENTANCE.

False repentance is that kind, which sins in repenting, and thus bring more wrath. It is a kind of repentance, which grieves because it may not sin, without repenting. It is repentance which would gladly accomplish the annihilation of the soul. It would if it could, curse God and die. But this is not the sorrow which is unto salvation. All the sorrow which springs up in the soul under the pain of punishment, is almost certainly selfish and false. That which springs from an apprehension of wrath may be genuine, not certainly so, but *may be* ;—for knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men, and we preach wrath to

come, that sinners may hear, and fear, and repent. But the anguish of soul produced by a consciousness that we have acted, in sinning, a foolish, ungrateful, and wicked part,—that we have wronged our souls in robbing them of holiness; and God, in coming short of his glory: that, which has as much regard to *sin*, as to the consequences of sin; that which opens the eyes of the understanding, and causes it to look backward and weep; and forward as the mariner looks to the rocks or the whirlpool, that he may avoid it; that which mourns more at Calvary in view of a bleeding Saviour, than at Sinai beneath its peals of thunder and its flames of fire; that which sorrows as truly over heaven lost, as over hell deserved; that which weeps as copiously for the beauty of holiness departed, as for wrath incurred: that is true repentance.

AFFLICTION.

God teaches some of his best lessons in the school of affliction. There, the Christian acquires the best kind of knowledge, experience! There, he is taught to know his own heart! There, he is made to feel the bitterness of sin! There, he becomes acquainted with the faithfulness and mercy of God, in holding him up in the dark waters, and walking with him through the fire of affliction. And this experience produces hope; a hope that he is savingly united to Christ; a hope of the glory of God; a hope that maketh not ashamed, keeping us steady at anchor through every storm, and when every support fails.

POWER OF GOD.

There is a peculiar manifestation of the power of God in those ~~that~~ believe. All creatures manifest his creative power.

Devils feel his power to punish. Angels display his power to govern, and uphold in unsullied holiness. But only those who believe, know the exceeding greatness and mighty working of his power, to recover from a fallen state and then to maintain ; here is at once a display of the power of his grace and the riches of his mercy.

HOW TO HEAR THE WORD.

Pray before you come, to prepare your heart. Pray when you return, that the Spirit may water and shine upon it.

To hear the word without humility, is to receive it, in unbroken ground, to be trodden down with the foot of pride. To hear it without candor, is to receive it in stony places ; it may produce an effect, but there is not honesty enough to confess it. To hear it, without a desire to profit, is to receive it among thorns and briers ; it can never grow up nor become productive. To receive it without faith and prayer, is not to harrow it in. And no matter what the nature of the soil, or what the diligence in hearing, or what the labor in grounding it in the memory ; without the dew of divine grace and the genial influence of the Spirit, it will lie, and rot, and perish. Failure in any one of these respects, will blast the prospect of a future harvest.

THE TEACHINGS OF NATURE.

We are told that the best discoveries which have been made, have been drawn from nature. The nautilus that skims over the bosom of the ocean, teaches the mariner how to trim his sails. The breast of the swan, teaches the ship-

builder how to fashion the prow of his vessel. So God sends us to nature to teach us wisdom in morals. "Ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air and they shall tell thee ; or speak to the earth and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee." They proclaim the wisdom of using and not abusing God's creatures. Each has an instinct that prompts him to the use of that and that only, and in such proportion as is profitable for health and strength. And if there be exceptions to this rule, they seem to be placed there by the great Creator himself, to exhibit the depravity of vice. The filth of the swine ; the gluttony of the cormorant ; and the indolence of the sloth, stand as so many beacons to man against the corresponding vices of our race.

PRAYING AND DOING.

Prayer requires more grace than doing, because our deeds are noisy, and glaring, and attract the gaze and admiration of men, and with many this is a sufficient reward. But prayer is quiet and retiring. It asks no ear, but the ear of God, no eye but the eye of Him who seeth in secret. But if you would do with effect,—pray ! If you would pray with effect,—do ! Turn your duties into prayers ; and your prayers into deeds ;—and prayer will make your doings sharper than Ithuriel's spear. Prayer is the golden key which turns every bolt, locks and unlocks every heart. It opens our bosoms, to pity and relieve. If men would pray, they would abound in every good work. It is said that men cannot pray and sin. Either they will leave off praying, or sinning. So, neither can men pray and be idle. Either they will leave off praying, or they will triumph over sloth and parsimony. Pray always, and it will impress

your hearts and bring every grace into exercise. It will clear your vision ; elicit your sympathies ; fan your benevolence, and bring down fire from heaven upon the altar and the sacrifice. Pray always, and the hearts of men will be open to receive you. Joshua and his host might have sounded the trumpet around Jericho until their lungs ceased to play, before the walls had fallen, unless they had carried the Ark to remind them that their help was in the name of the Lord. And you may not only sound with the trumpet, and shout with the voice, but apply the hammer, the fire, and the sword to the citadel of man's heart, in vain, unless, as John Bunyan would say,—“while playing the slings into the town, you send a petition to our Lord Shaddai, eanestly imploring help against Mansoul.”

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Clouds will sometimes obscure your path. “Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw.” Hope will sometimes faint ;—

“Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,”—

and from its topmost round, looks through the long vista of time, and sees the world a temple ; the human family a company of kings and priests to the Most High ; every hearth an altar ; and every heart a living sacrifice to the living God ; and thus reproves our fears, and excites our hopes.

Faith will languish and love grow cold ;—“Prayer gives exercise” to faith ; and faith works by love ; and they are the two hands of the soul to bring blessings from above, and dispense them to man below.

“Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright.” It gives sharpness to the sword, point to the arrow, and a heavenly polish to the helmet, breast-plate and shield. To your

knees, then, O Christian ! and let every work be begun, continued and ended with prayer !

MISSIONS, DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN.

Every word thrills through my soul ! “Domestic !” I think of home. I think of the savage Indian, too long oppressed and neglected. I think of the ignorant poor, in their cot and cabin, shut out by poverty, or custom, from the means of grace. I think of the more affluent in their palaces, whose very riches ensnare their souls.

“Foreign !” O what a field here opens ! The half-refined Asiatic ; the degraded African ; the debased inhabitants of the isles ; the Eastern Churches in the dimness of their long eclipse ;—by this word are brought before the mind’s eye, like the vision of dry bones, very many and very dry.

“Domestic and Foreign !” Our field is the world. This is the motto for the Missionary Church. If we would draw the people on to the Missionary enterprize, we must talk to them about the world. The world is given to Christ for an inheritance ; and of the world, we must, in the name of Christ, take possession. If we talk of less than the whole, we shall not possess ourselves of a fourth. For the world Christ died. His command is—“Go into all the world !” His promise is,—“All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God !”

DIFFICULTIES.

I know that difficulties lie before us. But what are difficulties ? I know that there are mountains of ice, and continents of burning sand before us ; and I know that there are higher, colder mountains of ignorance and error and

moral deserts, more arid and barren. I know that there are crooked ways and rough places to be traversed ; and I know that there are hearts more crooked and perverse to be encountered. But what, I ask again, are difficulties ? " Hast thou not known ; hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? " What are difficulties ? It is " He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth and before whom the inhabitants are as grasshoppers ; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent," who is working with us. What are difficulties ? They come from flesh ;—from arms of flesh and hearts of stone : and " all flesh is as grass " before Him ; and as for the hearts of men, He made them and can turn them.

What difficulties can we meet, that have not been met ? or, what lie in our way that did not lie before the first Christians ? Are men more blinded by prejudice now, than then ? faster bound in ignorance, or more enslaved to idolatry ? Is not the contrary the fact ? We ought not to mention difficulties. We have more bishops than there were apostles ; and more presbyters than there were disciples, when the command was first given,—to go and preach to all the world ;—so that if there be any real difficulty, it is not in lack of numbers, or talents, or money ; but in the want of heart. O, if we had hearts, to weep over a sin-ruined world ; hearts, to lay all at the feet of Jesus ; hearts, not to count our lives dear unto us, so that we might accomplish this work which God has given us to do ; then should we go as far, and labor as abundantly, and bring as many into the Church of God as did they ; and then should we realize the full import of the promise, " Lo, I am with you always." The command and the promise are linked together, and the connecting link is obedience. The moment the Church departed from the commandment, that moment

God departed from the Church ; and when the Church returns to primitive obedience, God will return with primitive blessings.

THE EVIL EYE.

On some things, man looks with a jaundiced eye, as holiness, and all that conduces to it. On others he looks through a false medium, such as the world and its enjoyments. If he looks at Christ, he sees no comeliness that he should desire him : if at holiness, Christian meekness is pusillanimity ; Christian patience, stoicism : Christian benevolence, an undue and lavish expenditure of that which belongs to his family. The Sabbath is a weariness ; prayer a task ; reading or hearing the word, a penance. In short, the whole Christian life he regards as a life of austerity ; and the commandments, a yoke intolerable to be borne. And why ? Because his eye is evil.

Again, he looks at the world, and that which is in the world, riches, honors, and pleasures, and they appear all inviting, substantial, and gay. He looks at life, and it appears to be a vista without an end. He looks at characters, and calls good, evil ; and evil, good. He looks at sin and it appears to be the very thing to be desired to make life happy. And why ? Because he looks not upon them with a single eye. He views death through an inverted telescope, and imagines it to be far off, at the very moment when it is applying the axe to the root of the tree. He views the world and sin through a prism, and thus invests the most unseemly objects, yea, and the most hurtful, with the richness of the diamond, and the beauty of the rainbow.

THE LAW OF GOD.

The Law of God is one and entire. Mar a part, and you spoil the whole. It is a golden chain, reaching from earth to heaven; and as long as man rendered sinless obedience, it served to connect him with his God. But the violation of one command, the breaking of a single link in the chain, renders the whole chain useless as to its first design.

THE HOPE OF THE HYPOCRITE.

It is like "a spider's web." Like the spider, the hypocrite weaves his web, his hope, his trust, out of his own bowels. It is the creature of his fancy; spun from the materials of self-righteousness. He may call it a garment to hide his shame, but it is a mere web, unfit to cover a naked soul, and easily rent. He may call it a house, but it is unavailable to "hide from the storm, or cover from the tempest." He may hold fast by it, but it shall fall, and he perish in the ruins. There is, there can be, no shelter, safety, nor security, in the cobweb of self-righteousness. If not stript off in the world, it will be swept away by the first breath of eternity.

AFFLICTION.

Affliction has its dangers as well as prosperity. The one is a smooth sea with rocks beneath the shining surface. The other is a troubled ocean, in a dark and stormy night.

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In the bitterness of his anguish, the Christian is sometimes

tempted to conclude, that he is not a child of God. Into this snare Gideon fell. "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" And so did David, when the sorrows of death compassed him. "I said in my haste I am cutoff from before thine eyes:"—and at another time, "I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind." But, in reply we may ask, "What son is he, whom the Father chasteneth not?" Who is that Patriarch yonder, under the command of God, binding his son, his only son, as a victim for the altar of burnt sacrifice? It is the Father of the Faithful and the friend of God. Who is that, hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, and driven into dens and caves? It is the man "after God's own heart,"—and the destined ruler of His people.

Who is that destitute, afflicted, and tormented man? It is he, of whom God testified, that he was His "servant, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and eseth evil."

Who are these arrayed in white, before the throne, and whence came they? "These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him, day and night, in His temple."

No affliction, no series of afflictions, are sufficient to prove that we are out of favor with God. On the contrary, if we neither faint under them; nor despise them; but endure them; it is a good proof of our adoption into the family of God. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." Job in the gate of the city,—sitting as a ruler among the people, never gave so striking a proof of his integrity to God, as Job lacerated, bleeding, and spit upon, among the ashes. Even Satan seems compelled, tacitly at least, to acknowledge him perfect and upright.

FAITH AND LOVE KNOWN BY OBEDIENCE.

The existence of faith and love in the heart, can only be known by obedience. God himself, speaking after the manner of men, professes ignorance of the fact except as it is illustrated by obedience. "Now," says he, "I know that thou lovest me." The nature of a tree is known by its fruits. You may lay open the bark ; you may trace the motion of the sap ; you may see the verdure of the leaves, and the beauty of the blossoms ; but you are as ignorant, as if the tree were twice dead, and plucked up by the roots, whether it be a good tree or not, until you have seen the quantity, and tasted the quality of the fruit. It is not quantity alone, nor quality alone, but both combined, which decide the character of the tree. And so you may see a man in the Church of God, flourishing like a green bay tree, in orthodox opinion, and budding like a rose of many flowers in profession ; but it is *obedience* that justifies a well-formed opinion of him, as a tree of righteousness, of the Lord's own right hand planting. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

ABRAHAM'S FAITH.

When called of God to leave his country and kindred, he disputed not the word, but went ;—and when in the promised land, though God "gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot upon," he patiently sojourned in it ;—and when he had no child, he acted as if a numerous progeny stood before him. When commanded to offer up his only son Isaac, the child of promise, he obeyed, accounting as assuredly that God was able to raise him up, as though redemption from the dead was an event of ordinary occurrence. In each instance, we perceive that his faith was a

simple trust in God's word, and implicit acting upon it. Was a promise set before him? Faith gave a present substance or reality to it. Was it a distant promise? Faith gave as real an evidence to it, as if it were seen, handled, and tasted. Was it a word of command without a promise? Faith placed the promise of another time, by the command of this, and thus obedience became easy; and thus "Faith wrought with his works, and by works, faith was made perfect."

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

While the death of Christ shows us our transgression, and our deserts, it shows us also our safety. The extended arms of the Saviour point us to our danger and our refuge. Christ endured the hiding of his Father's countenance, that it might shine upon us. He thirsted, that we might drink water from the wells of salvation. He gave up the ghost, that he might give us eternal life. He pardoned a sinner in his last extremity, to show that he had power to save the chief of sinners. In his dying breath, he sent forth an aspiration that whispers in every penitent believing sinner's ear,—“I have finished transgression:—I have made an end of sins:—I have made reconciliation for iniquity:—I have brought in everlasting righteousness:—It is finished!—Nothing is wanting to render pardon sure; deliverance from hell certain; salvation complete! All is finished that heaven decreed; the prophets foretold; the patriarchs hoped for; and now the faithful saying is written on every page of the New Testament, wherever the banner of the cross is unfurled; on each sacrament, and on every means of grace; “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

WORTH OF THE SOUL.

The real value of an object, is that which one who knows its worth will give for it. He who made the soul, knew its worth, and gave his life for it.

INCREASE OF FAITH.

Do you ask how faith is to be obtained ? and how increased ? One answer will suffice for both. "Faith is the gift of God ;"—the effect of a divine operation upon the mind, and "if ye have not, it is because ye ask not." It is to be sought by prayer, and yet not so as to lead to the neglect of other means. We derive life from God, but we derive it in the use of means. So faith is said to come from God, but it comes by the word ; therefore the word must be carefully studied. And it is increased by the exercise of reason, searching out what doctrines are revealed in the word. Thus the Bereans searched the Scriptures daily, and therefore, many of them believed. Faith strengthens by a clearer knowledge of God and Christ. Hence it is said to be life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Faith strengthens by the review of our own and others' experience. What God has done, is only a copy of what He will do. If we would remember His former mercies, we should not doubt His goodness and faithfulness for the future, for His hand is not shortened ; His interest is not abated. David, in his infirmity said,—“ God hath forgotten to be gracious.” But when he remembered “ the years of the right hand of the Most High,” then his faith grew strong. It is for this very end, that God has transmitted to us the records of His former providences, that “ the generation to

come might know them, and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God."

While, then, there is a God ready to give ; while you have *reason* to exercise in searching the Scriptures ; and while you have mercies to remember, and declarations, and promises from God, say not that you cannot obtain faith ; or having it, cannot increase and strengthen it.

CHRIST TO CONQUER SATAN.

As the "seed of the woman," the first injured of our race, He maintains perpetual enmity, and a perpetual conflict, with that old serpent, the Devil. He has undertaken, and will go through. He has already triumphed over him in temptation ; on the cross ; and in the grave. He is now contending with him in us, and soon will beat him down under our feet, as surely as He once defeated him in His own person. He remembers the injury done to the woman, and as certainly as He is the "seed of the woman," so certainly will He "bruise the serpent's head."

I WILL BE THEIR GOD.

It implies a right and title to all that God is, personally and essentially. But here we are lost. Can we measure the ocean with a span ? It is more than, I will be their Friend and Benefactor. It is more than everlasting life. It is more than, I will give you the blessings of heaven and earth, time and eternity. He will give the most, that infinite goodness can give, and therefore he gives *Himself*, with all His ineffable fulness. All His attributes are exercised in behalf of His people. He gives His mercy to deliver them

from guilt; and to comfort them in their afflictions: His wisdom to counsel and direct; His omnipotence to guard and protect; His holiness to sanctify; and His unchangeableness for the rock of our security,—“For all that I have is thine.” Carnal reason may ask,—how can these things be? They are indeed words of wonder; but they are words of soberness and truth, for “the mouth of the Lord hath spoken them.”

THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE HAPPINESS OF MAN.

These two objects are blended together, by the hand that united soul and body, in one man; light and heat, in one sun; holiness and happiness, in one heaven; and what God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

ALL FOR GOD'S GLORY.

Subordinately, gifts are for our own advantage; but supremely for His glory. If the divinely instituted order be reversed, the blessing is turned into a curse; that which was for our advantage, becomes injurious; and that which God made for good, is converted into evil. The flame which was to have been to us light and heat, is made a consuming fire. Wealth employed otherwise than as God wills, is a great talent, buried in the earth, which will bring great condemnation. Influence, employed for self-aggrandizement, while it advances us in power, honor, and rank, only carries us to a precipice, to plunge us into deeper degradation. Intellect employed to acquire fame, is making to ourselves pinions to bear us away to the land of darkness, where every passing spirit throws up the bitter taunt, “Art thou also become like unto us?”

CONFESSING CHRIST.

Is it not reasonable that we should profess what we believe?—if we are His servants, wear His livery?—if we are His soldiers, stand in His ranks?—if we are His children, sit at His table?

GLORY OF GOD.

God has no frowns; the law no curse; conscience no sting; and even enemies have no power to hurt those who make the glory of God the chief end of their existence.

2 COR. v : 1.—WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE WERE DISSOLVED, WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD, AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS.

Probably the Apostle had in view the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and the Temple at Jerusalem. By these two illustrations, he contrasts the present and future condition of the people of God. The latter, possessed all that the former had, and more; and that, in increased perfection and glory. So heaven has all that earth has, and more; divested of all its evils; and its good swelled to infinity, and stretched through eternity.

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The Tabernacle was ever moving from place to place :—the Temple was fixed and permanent. “Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one above.” All around us is moving, and we are moving also. “Man that is born of woman, never continueth in one stay :”—and the world, and the fashion of it, passeth away, like a shadow or a pa-

geant in a show. We are ever passing from one stage to another ; and ever flying from one to another state ; and the lights and the shades of life pass over us, like lights and shadows of sun and cloud, on the mountain-top. If we enjoy health, it goes :—if riches, they “take to themselves wings and fly away :” if honors, they fade like a leaf, or some competitor steals the rose and leaves the thorn with us : if pleasures, they perish in the using. And the very world in which we live, “passeth away.” We go like a ship before the wind,—and the world changes like the ebbing and the flowing tide.

But in that bright world to which we go, there is a city which hath foundations, whose builder is God. It is full of glory, riches, honor, pleasures, joys, and they are immovable, and they who possess them are immovable. There is no sea to toss its troubled waves on high ; no storm to agitate ; no sun to set ; no sickness to invade ; all is fixed as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved :—all is immutable, as God’s eternal throne.

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The holy place of the Tabernacle had no windows, but was illuminated by artificial light. The temple on the contrary had many windows, and was lighted with the true light which cometh from heaven. In this our Tabernacle, we derive our light through men, at best, poor dim tapers, often so destitute of the precious oil, that they are but smoking wicks. But there the true light shineth, without the frailties of men, or the imperfection of ordinances, to cast the slightest shade. O, the light of heaven will be glorious ! There shall be no night, nor error there, and they need “no candle,” no such flickering guides as we ; “neither the light of the sun,” not even the light of the Gospel, for the Lord God giveth them light.

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Such is the heavenly state ! O no ! As well might we hold up a glow-worm, and say—such is the sun ! The Temple, with all its gorgeous adornment, and sacred symbols, and holy services, and golden cherubim, and even with its manifestations of the Divine presence, can give us but a faint conception of that blessed state, with its precious privileges, and holy pleasures, and glorious ministry, and sublime adoration. They are no more to it, than the shadow to the substance.

THE LORD'S SUPPER, A TOKEN OF THE COVENANT.

The Lord's Supper is a token to us, of His perpetual remembrance that the covenant is always in His mind ; and it is a wisely adapted token. We may, in our incredulity, think that God hath forgotten to be gracious, but this memorial is a standing reproof to such unbelieving fears. In this ordinance God seems to say—Have I not made for thee a covenant ? Have I not promised never to break it ? Have I not placed my seal to the promise ; and have I not in virtue of this promise, raised up, for eighteen hundred years, a succession of servants to proclaim the covenant, exhibit the seal, and declare my fidelity ? And have they not, from time to time, administered to you the sacred emblems ? By this provision, I declare that I remember my covenant that is between me and you. Had God forgotten it, the Ministry of the New Covenant, and the Sacrament had long since ceased.

REJOICING IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

If we limit our reflections to present views, and to present enjoyments, our delight may be real but it must be limited. Dwell more upon the hope of eternal blessedness! Contemplate the pleasure at God's right hand for evermore! Look beyond the present scene! Cast your eyes across the river of death! It is but a narrow stream, and see there your bright and eternal inheritance! Set before your mind, the glorious manifestation God will there make of himself. Behold the vast assemblage of angels; and "spirits of just men made perfect;" the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the noble army of martyrs! Let faith conceive of Him who died, communicating Himself in all the brightest discoveries of His glory; and in all the riches of His grace! See Him gathering from every kindred, and people, those who have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Behold Him pouring out blessings, which "eye hath not seen" and of which "ear hath not heard," upon the heads of all, who, through grace, have been faithful unto death! Let faith appropriate all these to yourselves!—and you will then learn whence the Christian derives his delight; how he can be happy without the enjoyments of time and sense; and why it is, that they who have the love of God and the hope of glory in their breasts, have no sigh for the pleasures of the world.

THE CHURCH.

But where is Zion? A column still erect amidst the ruins of nations! Was ever such a thing known,—a citadel without a breach, though surrounded by enemies, with

engines of war on every side, through all time ; a vessel unbroken, though dashed for ages by the billows against the rocks ; a flock, and not a lamb lost though in the midst of ravening wolves. Yet thus it is with Zion ! Zion is still a city of holiness, the temple of the Most High, with her thousands of priests, and ten thousands of joyful worshippers. No bleeding victims expire upon her altars. No human sacrifice burns in her sacred fires. No abominable rites defile her walls ; but myriads of living offerings are presented. Praise swells forever through her dome, and " the beauty of the Lord God is upon her."

GOODNESS OF GOD.

How good, we never shall know until we see, and comprehend more fully and perfectly, than we now do, his glory, as God over all, and his humiliation, as " a worm, and no man." And yet we may, we can, we must endeavor to grasp that which is incomprehensible ; to fathom that which is unfathomable ; to measure that which is illimitable ; and to know that " which passeth knowledge." He who aims at the zenith, which he can never reach, shoots higher than he who aims at the loftiest mountain-top ; and thus it is with the man who aims to " comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ."

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When justice barred the gates of Paradise, and guarded with his flaming sword the tree of life, he made a new paradise, and planted a new tree of life, which is Christ ; and opened new rivers of life, which are his gracious influences, and no lion, or flaming cherubim are in the way.

REPENTANCE DELAYED.

The longer men remain impenitent, the harder it is to repent. In the tender years of youth, you looked forward to manhood as the time. Manhood came, and you looked forward to a period of easy worldly circumstances. Then you were tossed by the vicissitudes of fortune, and the cares of a family. Then you looked forward to the time, when all should be quiet and calm, but it never came ;— and now you look forward to old age. But of all periods of this human life, none is so unsuitable to a change of heart and conduct, even if all your worldly plans have been consummated, as old age ; for how shall they “do good, who have been accustomed to do evil?” It is easier to make port in a storm, than in a calm, and it is easier to turn to God in youth, though it be driven by the tempests of passion, than in old age, when those tempests have subsided.

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You begin to think of turning to God, not to-day, but, to-morrow. Did you not think so a year ago ? Have you not often thought so ? and are you any nearer the accomplishment of your purpose now, than then ? Whence came that thought ? Did it emanate from Him, from whom all holy desires do proceed ? I tell you nay. It came from the deceiver. He asks, he desires no better security for the destruction of the soul, than this one resolve, I will at a future year repent and turn to God.

GOD A FATHER.

When God promises to be our Father, it is as much as to say, you shall have my paternal affection. “I have

loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you."

You shall have my fatherly protection. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge."

You shall have my fatherly compassion. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

You shall have my fatherly provision. Son, "all that I have is thine." I will provide for your bodies, "take," therefore, "no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" I will provide for your souls:—"If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever."

THE BRIDEGROOM'S VOICE.

Men may go very far, and yet come short of the kingdom of heaven. Christians may slumber, but their lamps are burning. They may be alarmed at the sudden approach of death, but they soon trim their lamps, and the alarm subsides, and then with joyous hearts, they enter into the marriage. They might be spared the alarm, if they would keep their lamps trimmed, and their loins girt, and their eyes open, watching for the Lord's coming.

On the contrary, the alarm of the foolish increases at every step. They are alarmed at the cry. They tremble when they cannot obtain oil. Their fears gather blackness when they find the door closed. They sink down in utter despair at the sound of the voice within,—“Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”

FULLNESS AND FREENESS OF DIVINE GRACE.

An invitation more full, more free, more universal, more sincere, God could not have given. He has sent his "ministers daily, rising up early and sending them." In plain language they have proclaimed the fulness of divine grace, the freeness of the divine promises. That all might feel free to come, they have gone to the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, in the lanes of the city, to invite them to eat bread in the kingdom of God.

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And oil for your lamp is freely offered. By oil we mean *grace*, the grace of the Holy Spirit. To say that it cannot be obtained, is either to deny the fulness of Him, in whom dwells the fulness of the Spirit, without measure ;—or else, to say, that it is held at too high a price. But when and by whom, I pray you, was the infinite fulness of the Godhead exhausted. The fountain of grace, is like the fountain of light,—ever full, giving, impoverishes not. If you say that you are without money,—we answer, that as long as you think of buying, it is unattainable. But as it is *beyond* all price, so it is *without* price. That which is too costly for you to buy, is not too much for God to give.

SPIRITUAL DEATH.

This death of the soul, is spiritual ; so it is a living death ; a suffering death ; a death of degrees ; that is, the dead sinner is a living rebel. His inactivity concerns only that which is good. His corruption progresses through all his existence. It is a death which renders him capable of sufferings, intensely acute. So after the body ceases to

live, he lives a never-dying death, in the midst of ever-burning fire, tortured forever, with a never-dying worm. Such is man—dead in trespasses and sins, and such his prospects, heir of death eternal. Oh man! “thou hast destroyed thyself.” Is there no hope? O yes! “In me,” says Christ, “is thy help.” He is the “**LIFE** ;” and this life is the direct counterpart of that death. It implies that in him, is holiness for our corruption, justification for our guilt, and a title to glory, for our condemnation. Whatever we need, for pardon, peace, reconciliation, and everlasting life, is fully provided in Christ, and freely offered through Christ. So that if any man is lost, it is because he will not be saved. If destroyed, he is the sole cause of his own destruction. If he die the death, it will be because he would not come to Christ that he might have life.

MAN'S INABILITY.

Do any think they cannot come to Christ? Christ, indeed, says in one place, “no man can come to me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him ;” but he gives the reason in another place, why they cannot come,—because they “will not come.” It is the inability of Joseph’s brethren, who “*could not* speak peaceably to him, because they hated him.” It is the inability of a child who obeys not a parent, because he is head-strong, and self-willed. It is the inability of a man who cannot speak the truth, for no other reason than because he loves lying. So the inability of any sinner to come to Christ, is because something else has his heart and his affections, and he will not ; an inability, which only makes him the more inexcusable, and aggravates his condemnation.

God will excuse idiots and infants on the score of ina-

bility, but he will not so excuse rational men, who have faculties to love earthly objects, but not to love God ; and faculties for believing men, but not for believing God ; for obeying men, but not for obeying God. Their inability is their guilt, and will be their ruin.

BEWARE OF HYPOCRISY.

If it be worth while to have the appearance of godliness, much more is it to have the reality. Who would prefer the shadow to the substance ? the casket or the tinsel to the true gold ? Besides, as it has been well remarked, "it is far easier, safer, and more pleasant, to be *that* a man aims to appear, than to keep up the appearance of that which he is not : " that is, it is easier to be a consistent Christian, than a consistent hypocrite. Nothing can be more difficult than to be a consistent hypocrite ;—but to be a Christian, is to the new man, pleasant and easy, because it agrees with his new nature. A king can readily act the part of a king, but for an actor to do it, costs labor, and study, and weariness of the mind, and when the scene is closed, he is but an actor. He has neither throne, crown nor dominion.

THE VALUE OF WISDOM.

A beautiful gradation is to be observed in the estimate made by Solomon. He does not compare wisdom with the baser metals, but with those called precious. He first prefers it to silver, then to gold, more precious ; then to rubies, yet more precious ; and makes his climax by the desires of the mind ;—"all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared with it." It is more to be preferred,

more useful, more profitable, more satisfying, attended with far less anxiety, and more durable, and incorruptible.

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Wisdom is represented as a queen, extending gifts to her subjects, adapted to their various and diversified wishes. Is long life a blessing? "Length of days is in her right hand;" that is, she puts her followers in a way to insure health and old age; but if that should be denied by an all-wise Providence, she certainly puts them in the way to eternal life. Are riches and honors accounted blessings? "In her left hand are riches and honor;"—certainly the riches of grace and glory, and the honor that comes from God. Is pleasure an object worthy of pursuit? "Her ways are ways of pleasantness." There is pure delight and satisfaction in them. Can peace alone, make smooth and pleasant the rugged road of life? "*Her paths are peace*:"—peace in the end, and peace all the journey through. Is the happiness of heaven an object of desire? Does the soul shrink a'like from misery and annihilation? "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her." She is to them, what the tree of life in Paradise would have been to our first parents, had they never sinned,—a permanent source of enjoyment and life.

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It procures, or rather brings with it, the choicest blessings. It makes its possessors rich in faith; abundant in the exercise of that grace, which lays hold upon, and gives the soul a right or privilege to appropriate to itself, all the "unsearchable riches" of Christ, and the exceeding great and precious promises of his word:—rich in hope; in a firm expectation and persuasion of all the promised blessings; especially, in the hope of a glorious immortality;—

rich in love, the brightest gem that sparkles in the throne of God;—rich in good works; “laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come;”—rich in all holy enjoyments; in communion with God; in fellowship with the saints; in a perpetual banquet on the Redeemer’s flesh and blood; in “peace which passeth all understanding;” in quietness and assurance for ever; in the heart-felt satisfaction, which follows from a course of obedience to God’s commandments; and a firm reliance for salvation on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And all this is but a pledge and foretaste of riches, and greater blessings, as durable as precious. We can hold earthly things, at most, no longer than the present life; but the benefits of wisdom will remain with us forever. They will increase with our age, and double as other things decline; and the moment when they will be most precious, will be when life is departed. And when the gates of heaven open upon our astonished vision, then how rich and glorious will they be! Could all the monarchs of earth combine to bring together the whole of their splendor, wealth and glory, and confer it upon one individual, it would bear no comparison with the wealth, splendor and glory, of one of wisdom’s poorest children, in the kingdom of heaven.

Well may Solomon say, “the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.” Well may the apostle esteem them “unsearchable riches.” Well may the Saviour call it, the “pearl above all price.”

Nor is wisdom less beautiful as an ornament, than valuable as a treasure. Gold, pearls, and precious stones, decorate the body; but wisdom infinitely more adorns the soul. There is no ornament, like an ornament of grace;

no golden chain, like a chain of good works ; no ruby so beautiful, as the divine image in the soul of man.

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But men are as ambitious of honor, as of wealth—so wisdom holds, in the same hand, riches and honor. When she enriches, she exalts, not with honor that is “an empty bubble,” but with that which never fades. There is *that*, in religion itself, which ennobles and elevates the character. The truly religious man, is a high-minded man, an honorable, philanthropic, and godlike man. His neighbors may make a greater figure in the world, but he is possessed of more intrinsic worth. A heavenly-wise man in rags, rivals a carnal prince, in purple and gold. He sustains a higher relation, and a higher character. He is more useful in his life, and more honored in his death. He sheds a brighter lustre as he passes on, and leaves a better name when he is gone. Lazarus was more honorable, and more honored in his rags, than Dives in his robes. Alexander the Great has not left such a name, as Stephen the Martyr. The one received honor from men, the other, from God.

But the distinguishing display is reserved for another state of being ;—as the chief honor of a prince is displayed on the day of his coronation ; and of a soldier after his victory ; and of a wrestler after the race is run. Here we are in our ministry ; here we are fighting and wrestling, and when these are over, and at the end, then comes the crown.

ADOPTION.

The greatest act of kindness that can be shown to a fatherless child, is to adopt him ; and that mercy is to be found in God. He looks upon man the sinner, in his out-

cast, lost, and ruined state, and in love makes him his child. He was the child of God, by creation, as the angels are, but that privilege he forfeited, and then had no more right than the devils themselves to call God FATHER. But now through grace, he is made the child of God, by adoption.

Men adopt children, either because they have no children of their own, or because of something prepossessing in the person adopted, or because he is the child of a near friend or relative ; but none of these apply to ourselves and God. He has myriads of spirits whom he had created ; and man has no claim upon his goodness, but the very contrary—he is a rebel and apostate, and has become the child of the devil. Hence, while it is in every case an act of benevolence in man to bestow such a favor ;—in God, it is grace and mercy. For there is guilt to be pardoned, ingratitude to be forgotten, rebellion to be forgiven. Man adopts the child of his *friend*, rarely a stranger, never an enemy ; but when we were enemies, in the hand of an enemy, God sent and brought us,—renewed and adopted us, and taught us by his spirit to say, “ Abba, Father. ”

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There is mercy in the beginning, and mercy runs through every subsequent period. God does not take us up as we do the children of the poor destitute, to educate and maintain for a season, and then turn adrift to provide for themselves. No. His mercy is everlasting. He is an “ everlasting Father,” and we are his children forever, on earth and in heaven, through time and through eternity.

PROMISES AND DUTIES.

It becomes us to inquire what is our duty in reference to those events which God has decreed, prophets have

foretold, saints waited for, and the whole creation groaneth to realize. Every doctrine, prediction, and promise, has its correspondent duty; and the duty is written in characters not less legible, than the doctrine, prediction, and promise. If it is written, "by grace are ye saved;" it is also written, "**BELIEVE** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "**WORK** out your own salvation." If it is promised,—"**behold** I will pour out my Spirit upon you;" it is also written, "He will give his Holy Spirit to them that **ASK** him." If it is predicted that the kingdom of Christ shall be extended; it is also written, "how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach, except they be sent?"

Our duty, then, is to pray and labor for the accomplishment of God's promises and purposes; and our prayers and labors must reach as far as they, that is, they must embrace the whole family of man. In other words, the same spirit of benevolence that is in Christ, the Head, must pervade the members; and "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." They may call themselves by his name, but he will say, "I know ye not."

COMMUNION WITH GOD.

This communion consists in giving and receiving. The believer gives to God his heart his faith, his obedience,—in fine, all that he is, and all that he possesses; and God gives himself to the believer. He cheers him with his presence, strengthens him with his grace, instructs him by his Spirit, and out of the fulness of his treasury, communicates grace upon grace. The consequence is, that during

this holy intercourse between God and the soul, the believer rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But painful experience tells us, that in this life, our communion with God is at best but incomplete. Perfect communion, is reserved for that new state of being, when we shall walk with God and the Lamb, in the streets of the new Jerusalem. This communion is not only imperfect, it is often totally interrupted, and to all appearance, the renewed soul relapses into its original darkness, and he imagines, that there is no difference between himself and those who are plainly "without God in the world." But in the sight of the all-searching eye, there is a marked difference.

Who knows not, that when the shining sun is eclipsed, he hath not swerved from his centre, and that soon again his bright beams will illuminate and cheer the world? And why? Because, though now in darkness, the world still moves on in her appropriate orbit, and all that intercepts the light will soon be removed. Just so the believer; though he may have lost the divine presence, yet he has not lost his love; and though in darkness, yet he moves on in the path of Christian duty, and soon, "light shall rise in obscurity, and his darkness shall be as the noon-day." For the present, he mourns his Saviour's absence; and the depth of his mourning proves the sincerity of his love; and his language is, "O that I knew where I might find him!" "Return, O Lord, how long?" His soul watcheth for the Lord, more than they who wait for the morning.

THE GUILT OF UNIMPROVED OPPORTUNITY.

Not to stretch out a helping hand to the suffering, although they may escape by other means, is, as far as we

are concerned, to promote their destruction. There can be no innocent neutrality, when we have the power of averting evil or securing good to our neighbor. If the inhabitants of Meroz came not to the help of the Lord, the curse of God rests upon them as truly, as if they fought in the enemy's ranks. If the priest and the Levite pass by the man who fell among thieves, the guilt of robbery and murder lies at their door. If I have the ability of rescuing a drowning man and do not, I am as really guilty as if I plunged a dagger to his heart. If I bear not witness in favor of my neighbor, when, with a clear conscience, I could do it, I join hands with those who "bear false witness" against him. And so the sentence of the last day will proceed on the ground of omission ;—"I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat ; thirsty, &c."

BENEVOLENCE.

While benevolence has a tender heart, compassionate eye, and hands as soft as the down of innocence, she is shod with brass, to spurn at dangers, and trample difficulties under foot.

INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE.

To say that you are but *one*, and have no influence, and therefore your example is of no importance, is mock modesty, and that which you would not allow another to say of you. To reason thus, is, as if each particle of water in the bosom of the deep should say, I am but one, and a small one, and so should pass off into a vapor : where then would the ocean be ? Or, as if each particle of matter should say, I am but a grain, and so should fly off into

the immensity of space : where then would the world be, in which we live ? and where the sun, the moon, and stars, which give us light and heat ? That you are but one, is the very reason why you should not act singly, when you may co-operate with others. Let all the drops combine, and they will form an ocean of benevolence, which will begirt every island, and wash the shores of every continent.

The whole consists of its parts. You are a part, and you owe it to yourself, your neighbor, your country, and the world, to cling, in every good work, to your kindred parts.

GOODNESS OF GOD.

We are encompassed by mercies on every side. At every time, and in every thing, God has given us instances of his goodness. Every season has returned with its proper blessing ; every day with its needful supply, and every week with its hallowed day of rest.

RICH AND POOR.

It comes not by chance, that one man is rich and another poor. It is God who gives power to get wealth. "The gold and the silver" are his, and he bestows them upon whom he will ; and it is God who makes poor. He appoints one man to a palace, and another to a cottage. Nor is this the disposition of mere arbitrary power. It is the arrangement of infinite goodness, guided by infinite wisdom.

God has assigned to every man that rank in life, and

that proportion of this world's goods, exactly suited to his capacity. To some, he gives ten talents, to some, five, to others, one ; "*to every man according to his ability.*" He who would have a larger portion than Providence has assigned him, would be like a large bird with small wings, the weight of whose body, being disproportioned to his pinions, would bear him down continually to the earth. "In whatsoever state we are, let us learn therewith to be content."

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It is easier for the poor to say, "give us this day our daily bread," than for those who have goods laid up for many years. Gratitude burns warmer and brighter upon the poor man's altar, than upon his, who feels himself independent. Faith will be stronger in the man, who receives daily proofs of God's fidelity to his promises, than in him, who loses sight of Providence, in his own skill, foresight, energy and enterprise. The poor more readily feel the vanity of the world, and are more easily convinced of the substantial glories and realities of heaven, than they who find their pleasures in the pomps, vanities, and glories of the world, and whose vision is obscured by the false glare of worldly grandeur.

LOVE OF MONEY.

Once allow yourselves to love it, and you know not where to stop. And it does not require large possessions to create the appetite. The man with a cottage, or an acre of land, or the youth with a dollar, or the child with a penny, may be as really caught by the enemy's bait, as the lord of a manor, or the proprietor of millions. And this lust, once conceived, "brings forth sin," the sin of

peculation, fraud, oppression, wrong and robbery,—and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

WHY CHRISTIANS DO SO LITTLE.

It is because they *believe* so little. They do not half believe that a glorious day is coming. They do not half believe in the efficacy of divinely appointed means. They do not half believe that “they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever.”

Another reason is, that they *pray* so little. They do not consider that three petitions out of six, in that form of sound words given by Christ, as a model to his disciples, have reference to the evangelizing of the world. They pray vastly more for the supply of their temporal wants, than they do for the coming of Christ’s kingdom. Did the one bear any proportion to the other, they would be as diligent in serving the Lord, as they are “diligent in business.”

THE OBLIGATION OF GIVING.

Now what are your obligations? They go far beyond one dollar a year. When there were but few of God’s people to compare, one with another, a man of large faith said,—“of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth to thee.” And in another age and under another dispensation, a son of Abraham said,—“Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.” It has been well said, that “a farthing less than a tenth should make an enlightened and intelligent Christian suspicious of incurring the sin of sacrilege.”

THE REWARD OF TURNING MEN TO GOD.

He who lays himself out to do good to the souls of men shall not be disappointed in his hopes. Whether he be parent, pastor, or teacher, God will not suffer him to labor in vain, and spend his strength for nought. He may cast in his seed, and it may be many a day before he reaps, but in due season, his harvest will come. If *not*—still his reward is sure. God will give to every man his penny, though not one head should spring nor a single ear be produced. We are accountable only for our *labor*, not for our *success*.

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This man is twice blessed. He reaps two harvests, and receives two rewards. He is blessed in his deed ; that is, in doing his work ;—and then, after that, “his works do follow him.” He reaps a harvest in this world. He is rewarded with a deeper experience, and a fuller enjoyment. God will make his soul as a well-watered garden, where faith and hope shall ripen to full assurance, and love be as a fruitful vine, and joy and peace fill the air with their sweet perfumes : and when translated to the world on high ; tongue cannot tell how glorious his reward will be. Thus much, and this is all we know, he shall shine “as the stars forever and ever.”

 PLEA FOR SEAMEN.

They are on a voyage, that will either ~~make~~ or ruin them for ever. O, let us give them a gallant ship, that shall bear up against the oppositions of the world ; outride “a sea of fire, then rest on Zion’s hill.” Give them a

pilot who never slumbers nor sleeps; who knows the fair haven, where they would be, and who never yet suffered shipwreck. Give them an anchor, that will keep the soul steadfast, amidst the storms of this present life, though the waves rise up to the heavens, and a cable that cannot be broken, though the North wind lash the sea into fury. Give them a chart, which will show every rock, and shoal, and quicksand, in the ocean of life. Give them a star to steer their course by, with such wisdom, that they may not strike the lee-shore unawares.

The Church is that ship; Christ is that pilot; Faith is the cable; and the anchor, Hope; the chart is the Word of God; and His Glory, the polar star. With all these, they go with a fair wind, under full sail to the haven above,

“Where anchored safe, the weary soul,
Shall find ETERNAL rest.”

CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH.

Of all who have passed from this world to the kingdom above, little children form by far the largest part. Now if they formed a part of the Jewish Church, which is typical of the Christian; and if they formed a part of the heavenly kingdom, which is the Christian Church, perfected and glorified, who will venture to affirm that they ought not to have a place in the Church upon earth. It would be a strange flaw in the chain. It would be a strange anomaly in the divine procedure, that Jewish children went from a Church state on earth to the Church in heaven; but that Christian children are cut off,—thrown out of the Church on earth, yet as soon as they die, enter the heavenly.

RELIGION IN THE HEART.

It is heart work. Hence, the promise is, "I will give them a new heart:" the demand is, "My son, give me thy heart:" the declaration is, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Repentance is the sorrow of a broken and contrite heart. Love burns on the altar of the heart. The heart being right, all else is right. It is the fountain. Purify it, (and unless there be great ignorance in the understanding,) the stream of action that flows through the life, will be right. If it be healthy, the whole system will be healthy. If it be right towards God, the life will be RIGHT toward men.

GOD'S CARE OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

God has always shown his regard to children; by encircling them with the arms of his Providence; by bringing them within the scope of his promises; by making them party in his covenants; by commanding and directing his servants concerning them. To Abraham, He said,—“I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed:”—and He commanded him to put the seal of the Covenant on his children;—and He brought up all the little ones out of the house of bondage, and caused them, with their fathers, to be “baptized in the cloud and in the sea,”—and carried them “as on eagles’ wings,” through the wilderness. When the people stood before God at the Mount, to covenant with God, their children were there. When He gave laws to the fathers, it is with the command to teach them to their children. When the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel Church is established, a place is still reserved for children,—

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven." When parents are baptized, their households are baptized with them. When Gospel promises are made, they are made to parents, and to their children. When Gospel duties are enjoined on Gentile converts, this holds a prominent place, to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." By all which, and especially by our Saviour's words and actions, when they brought young children to him, we perceive God's good will, and our duty towards them.

CHILDREN TO BE RELIGIOUSLY TAUGHT.

Reason would teach us, if Revelation did not, that childhood was the most propitious period of life to instill those precepts, ingraft those truths, and form those habits, which become the people of God, who are emphatically styled a "holy" and "peculiar people." It is common sense, to put the seal to the wax while it is soft; to bud the tender twig with the fruit it should bear; to go to the fountain-head and guide the current of the stream; and to lay hold upon the young tendrils of the shooting vine, and to train them, as we would have them to go.

THANK-OFFERINGS.

Though Jesus Christ is only meritorious, we may not serve God with that which costs us nothing. "Under the law," says Wheatley, "every parent was required to bring something that put them to an expense: even the poorest were not wholly excused, but were obliged to do something though it were but small." Though no such law now exists, yet surely the law of gratitude forbids that the amount of thank-offerings be withheld. Nay we think that thank-

offerings should be richer under the Gospel, than under the Law ; inasmuch as our burdens are lighter, and our blessings greater.

BAPTISMAL OBLIGATIONS.

Samuel, when dedicated to the Lord, did not cease to be an object of care, and interest, and love to his parents. He was their's still, and much more to their comfort. And you, when you give your children to God, are brought into a closer connexion, and are united by a more sacred tie, and have in them an interest unknown, unfelt before. By birth, you are common members of an earthly family ; by Baptism, they are brought with you into the visible family and household of God. By birth, they are your's in the tie of nature ; in Baptism, those ties are strengthened by the bonds of Christian fellowship. By birth, you are bound to bring them up for life ; by Baptism you are laid under the most sacred obligation, to bring them up for God and eternity.

Think you, that you have done all, when you have had your children baptized in the name of the holy Trinity ? No. That is a transaction, which should influence your whole conduct towards them in after life. God does not *immediately* take the gift to himself, but for a time commits it to your "nurture and admonition ;" and, in effect, says,—Be ye nursing fathers and nursing mothers to these children. In all your conduct towards them, remember that you act for me. When you punish them, do it as for me, as an act of Church discipline, that they may be my obedient children. When you instruct, remember that it is for me, that they may know and do my will. When you choose their occupation in life, remember that it is for me, that it must be

such as will enable them to honor and glorify me. And in all the example you set them, still remember, it is for me, "that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven." And if one of these little ones perish through your neglect, "I, the Lord, will require it at your hands."

"HARD TIMES."

And why are the times hard? If sins may be seen in the punishment, this is the answer,—Because we have robbed God. "Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and in offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."

Will ye say, Because he thus punishes us, we will sin more? Must God first remove the rod, or we first put away our sin? Plainly the latter. "Bring ye," says He, "all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY..

All are from heaven, but Charity alone returns thither again. Faith and Hope are made for the world, for time, for man in his probation state. Love is for time and eternity. It is brightest in heaven. It outlasts the fleeting breath, and comes from the furnace, like the gold that is purified. Faith is lost in sight; and Hope in fruition; but a sight of God in glory, and the fruition of heavenly enjoyment, only

* Mal. iii. 8—10.

serve to enkindle the soul to the highest degree of fervor in Love. In a world of bliss, alone, Love yields entire obedience to the two great commandments of the law,—
“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.”

LOVE OF CHRIST.

The first property of this affection is *delight* ; delight in the character, office, and will of Christ. He who loves him, would not that one jot or tittle were added to, or taken from him. Less of holiness or wisdom, less of justice or truth, would so mar the matchless assemblage of excellencies that meet in his person, that to the eye of perfect love, it would be as a spot in the sun, or as if the rainbow were robbed of one of its tints.

He who loves Christ delights to contemplate his glorious person. Wherever he goes, the language of his heart is, ‘I would see Jesus.’ He looks for him through the lattices of his closet ; and when the hallowed morn arrives, he says, I will hasten to the sanctuary and “see the goings of my God, my King.” And in the breaking of bread, he sees him in the most lovely character, as the Lamb that was slain, opening the seals of the everlasting Gospel.

The second property of Love, is good-will. In reality, man can be of no service, nor profit to God : and yet Christ has set up an interest in the world, which he delights to see maintained, and he has left its maintenance to men. He has established a kingdom, with which his glory is blended, and he has left its advancement to his disciples. He has left representatives upon earth to receive the tithes of his vineyard. In them, he who loves Christ, sees Christ. If he sees a languishing Church, he regards it as Christ’s

languishing body. If he sees a suffering servant of his, he looks upon him as a member of Christ's body, and with good-will renders him service, as he would to Christ. We have no substantial way of doing Christ service, but through his members. Who would not think it an honor to entertain Christ, were he now in the world? Where there is this love there will be an ear open to the cries of the poor; a hand stretched out to afford relief; a heart burning with zeal to promote his glory.

A third property of Love, is desire. That which we love we desire to possess, and the warmer our affection, the more ardent will be our desire, until the soul hungers and thirsts and cries for it, and strives to reach it. Such is the longing of the soul after Christ when it is imbued with holy love. It has other necessities, but Christ is all its desire, and all its song. It can never rest satisfied until it can say, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine."

Nor can he rest here, for another desire springs up spontaneously in the heart, and that is to be with him. He is not content with this transient, uncertain, and partial intercourse between the soul and Christ on earth; therefore, he would cross the sea which separates them. He would gladly "drop this load of clay, and die to see his face." Had he the wings of a dove, he would fly away and be where Jesus is. His desire is to depart and be with Christ. His cry is, "When shall I come to appear before the presence of God." He has other objects of love besides, but none to be compared with this. All others are subordinate; this is supreme.

PREACHING.

Preaching has its auxiliaries but it has no substitute. Some other means, as pioneers may go before, or as the van-

guard may prepare the way, such as education, tracts and religious books, and some may follow after, as ordinances, church-fellowship and discipline, but the great company of those who preach the word, are the Lord's instruments for overthrowing the kingdom of Satan. So Christ appeared in the world, as a prophet or preacher. He sent his Apostles to preach, and gave them commandment to send others. By preaching the three thousand were converted. The great Apostle thanks God that he baptized but few of the Corinthians, but glories that he was sent to preach the Gospel. He despised tribulation that he might preach it; yea, he "counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might finish, (that is faithfully accomplish,) the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus."

PREACHING CHRIST.

Where is it that among so many prophets, and so much prophecy, and to so many dry bones, it can be said to so few, "You hath he quickened;" whence, but from the fact, that though the prophets prophecy to the bones, they preach another Gospel. They do not preach "Christ crucified." The pole must not only be lifted up but the serpent must be upon it. The angel must not only fly in the midst, but he must carry the everlasting Gospel! We must not only stand among the dry bones, but we must cause them to hear the word of the Lord, and this is the word,—the glorious Gospel of Christ.

We have heard men preach, and they have attracted the gaze of the multitude; and they have preached nothing but truth, but there has been no moving among the dry bones because they did not preach the whole truth; they did not preach Christ. He was not the selected topic for the oc-

casion. They have preached man the sinner, but not Christ the Saviour. They have taken away false gods, but not declared the true God. They have dashed the cup of pleasure from the lips, but they have not given the cup of salvation. They have ground the broken cistern to powder, but they have not opened the living fountain. They have proved the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, but they have not preached from them, "the blessed hope of everlasting life." Their preaching is a garden, beautiful to the eye, fragrant to the smell and enchanting like another Paradise, but there is no tree of saving knowledge or of life. In it there is indeed a sepulchre, but the Lord is not there; no, nor angel to say, "Behold he goeth before you." In truth, they all roll an insurmountable stone upon the grave, and consequently such preachers have no Pentecostal day.

There are others who preach *about* Christ,—*about* his heavenly glory, and his worldly poverty. They sing of his nativity in such a lovely voice, that you would fancy yourself on the plains of Bethlehem. They throw such a halo of glory around his brow, that you would say that it were the glory of the Highest. They paint with such a master-hand, the scene of his agony and bloody sweat, that you would think Christ himself evidently before your eyes, but they preach not the grave of our Lord Jesus Christ; none are enriched. They speak not of our relations to him, and none are pricked in their hearts:—nor the glories of his office and character, and his relations to us, and none go away rejoicing.

TRUE BENEVOLENCE.

Mere giving is no more the genuine charity of the Gospel, than mere motion is life and intelligence. That there

is an obvious distinction between the outward act, and the inward offering, is most manifest from the apostle's words,—"though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Of the thousands, on the left of the throne of judgment, there will be found many who have opened a liberal hand, who have been the patrons of the poor, and the supporters of religion, but it will profit them not, because their hearts were not right towards God.

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True benevolence has a believing regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. "Do all things as unto the Lord," that is, when we regard the poor as in Christ's stead, and love and relieve them for his sake. This puts a peculiar excellency and honor upon our acts; and then they are regarded by Christ as done to himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." When an object of charity presents itself to our notice, we should imagine Christ himself to be before us, and if we have hearts to feel, *that* will be a more eloquent and effective appeal, than the strongest and most glowing language that mortal tongue could utter.

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This spirit is the test of our religious character. A man may be naturally churlish and illiberal; he may not have a thought, or anxiety beyond himself; but when grace takes possession of the soul, it expands; the hand releases its grasp, and the man becomes a blessing to all around him. The affections of his breast are turned towards God supremely, and towards man for God's sake; and his outward actions correspond with his inward affections. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he

love God whom he hath not seen." Vain are our pretensions to a spiritual change, unless this first, great, and obvious fruit of grace be seen in us. It is precious fruit which grows not on the thorns and briers of an unredeemed heart. Men may indeed be what is termed liberal from merely selfish motives, or by a kind of instinct, but it partakes of no moral excellence. So the brute beast may perform a noble act, and evince affection for its offspring, but we never think of attaching moral worth, either to the action or to the emotion.

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Light and heat are not more invariably attendant on the sun, than the sacred glow of benevolence, and the clear shining of holiness, are on our regeneration.

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As you hope to stand accepted before God, cultivate this gracious principle. It is not in us by nature; and if you feel your entire destitution, go to that God, who alone can shed abroad this love in your heart. And then remember, that it is capable of cultivation, and this is the proper employment of rational, intelligent, and religious beings. You were created for this very purpose. Love and good works act reciprocally upon each other, and tend towards each other's perfection. "Abound in love." Surely we ought to love those who are made by the same hand; bought with the same blood, and sanctified by the same spirit. We must love those who are loved so much of God, and bear his image. Rather if we love the Head, we shall love the members; if we love Him that begat, we shall love those who are begotten of Him." Abound then in love to God, and you will abound in good works. Set yourself

to do good to those who are in need, whatever the nature of the need may be ; and if only pity move at first, it will soon ripen into love. While seeking your own good, both temporal and spiritual, seek to advance the temporal and spiritual good of those within your sphere of action. Do it, not accidentally, as a miserable object may present itself to your notice ; or as you may be appealed to from the pulpit, or the press ; but form your *design* ; lay your *plan* ; adopt your *system* ; and pray always that you may in some good degree resemble Him, who made it his meat and drink, and who went about " doing good."

WHAT IS FAITH?

The difficulty in this question arises from two causes ; *first*, from the propensity of some, particularly the careless, to persuade themselves that all is right and safe in their case, and hence they run into the mistake, that the simple assent of the mind to the system of faith revealed in the word of God, resulting from mere education, or from the circumstance of being born in a Christian land, is faith, though it neither affect heart nor life. It is faith just as much as a dead body is a man, and no more, and will be found of no more use to its possessor, than a dead body is to society.

The second source of difficulty, lies in the vast importance of the case. The man feels that every thing for eternity depends upon faith. He feels that a mistake here would be fatal ; and hence his very anxiety to be right, I had almost said, causes him to be wrong,—it causes him to approach the subject as one of the deep things of God, hard to be understood. He cannot be persuaded that faith is one of the very simplest exercises of the mind. The cre-

dence of a child in the word of his father, which is so natural and simple that any child can comprehend it, is the very same principle as that of a belief in the word of God. In both cases it influences the mind and the conduct. In both cases it is belief, trust, confidence ; the result of evidence. When genuine, it is combined with love and fear ; love of the person, and fear of his displeasure. The absence of fear, implies a want of confidence in threatening. The want of love, implies a disregard of favor. There may be an acknowledgment that such and such things have been said, but the deficiency of fear and love leave upon the mind the delusion that somehow or another they will not be performed, and so it becomes a "dead faith," that is, no faith at all.

The world is Satan's bait. He seldom throws out a naked hook. Let murder, fraud, lying, or idolatry, be presented in their undisguised turpitude, and few of good education and correct morals can be taken captive by him. But he conceals the hook in a goodly bait, like a skilful angler. He knows how to use that part of the world, which is best suited to our taste, and most likely to decoy. For one, he has a golden bait ; for another, pleasure ; for a third, worldly consequence and honor. And his line is thrown out in every place ; in the place of business, in our families, studies, at our tables, and on our pillows.

SELF-DENIAL.

To renounce the flesh, is to lay the axe to the root of the tree. The agent in the great work, is the Spirit of God ; the means are, "denying ourselves all ungodliness and

worldly lusts ; in "mortifying the flesh with its affections and lusts ;" in plucking out right eyes, and cutting off right arms ; in laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. If we have a strong natural appetite for any object, against that we must wage special warfare. It must be renounced. It must be mortified, by the practice of the contrary virtue. If intemperance or gluttony be the besetting sin, we must be more abstemious and self-denying than others. If it be covetousness, we must force ourselves to liberality, rather beyond, than under our means. If it be a vain desire for splendor, we must be plainer in our persons, furniture, and equipage, than we otherwise might be.

Until this is done, we are in constant danger of being snared and taken ; if it be intermitted, we are in danger of returning like the dog to his vomit. Remember Lot's wife ! who, through fear, left Sodom, but renounced not the flesh, and so perished on the plains as suddenly, and as awfully, as if she had tarried in the city. Remember the Israelites ! who escaped from the bondage of Egypt, but still lusted after its flesh pots. They renounced not their besetting sins, and so fell in the wilderness. Remember Judas ! who left all and followed Christ, but he renounced not his darling lust. He changed his course and his calling, but his heart was not changed. With all his professions, and attendance upon Christ, he loved money, and so perished in his iniquity.

It is not enough to renounce one enemy. We must renounce all. Death is as certain from one, as from all. To flee from one, and not from another, is, "as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him : or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him."

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No sin may be spared, though it be a little one ; no truth rejected, though it be a mysterious one ; no duty avoided, though it be a hard one.

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God does not ask you to conquer all his foes, the instant you enlist under his banners ; but He does require, that you should enlist in good faith ; that you should totally and for ever abandon " the armies of the aliens," and manfully fight against sin, the world, and the devil, and " continue his faithful soldier and servant till your life's end."

INABILITY.

You are taught first the Creed, to know what you must believe ; then, the commandments, to know what you must do ; then the prayer, that you may know where your strength lies ; and when you have asked wisdom, and God has refused it,—strength, and God has withheld it,—his Spirit, and God has denied it,—then, and not till then, will your plea of weakness be admitted, for neglecting your duties to God.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER.

God has made ready a great supper in the Gospel ;—plentiful provision for the souls of men. Here is " bread to strengthen man's heart ;" and wine to cheer him ; and " fat things full of marrow," to gratify every taste and appetite ; and oil to make him a cheerful countenance ; and garments of fine linen and wrought gold, even the righteousness of Christ, meet for those who stand in the presence

of the Holy of Holies. In the Gospel, the glorious Gospel, there is grace to pardon, grace to justify, grace to sanctify, grace to glorify, and grace to satisfy the largest demands of every soul that accepts the invitation.

In preparing a large supper there is a display of skill ; an expenditure of money ; a devotion of time ; and much cost of labor. Witness that which King Ahazuerus made "for his princes, his nobles, and servants, and all that were at Shushan, the palace."

In the Gospel feast, there is a *display of skill* that is infinite. If all the wisdom of all men, of all time, were concentrated in one individual, he could no more have contrived such provision for man's spiritual necessities, than he could conceive "the notion of another sense," in the animal man. There is an *expenditure* against which the wealth of worlds on worlds were a cypher in the account. The bread of the kingdom was purchased, "not with corruptible things as silver and gold." There is a devotion of *time*, yea, of eternal ages. In spreading the table, the counsels concerning it began before the world began. There is a consumption of *labor*, unequalled by the toil expended, or all the most magnificent exhibitions of human industry and art. It was the labor of Omnipotence : the work of "God manifest in the flesh." The God of all heavens, became a "man of no reputation." The Ruler of all became the servant of all. The fountain of bliss was filled with sorrowful travail, in preparing this entertainment for man. In six days he made the world, and all things therein, but for thirty years and more, he labored to prepare this feast. By a *word*, and *that* was done ; but for *this* he endured toil, reproach, agony, and death. For man's temporal wants, he commanded the earth, and it brought forth abundantly ; but for his spiritual necessities, his own body is bruised and broken.

ZEAL.

Zeal, in the abstract, is not grace, nor any proof of grace. Jehu was zealous for the destruction of idolatry, and cried out, "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord," but he was not a man of grace. Paul, before his conversion, was zealous for the law, but he was under the curse of the law. Zeal to be genuine, must be centred on a worthy object, and spring from a pure motive. It must have no private ends in view, and it must emanate from faith and love. Thus Phineas stood up and executed judgment on Zimri and Corbi. "He was zealous for my sake," said the Lord, "and it was counted to him for righteousness." "It is good to be zealously affected in a good"—but not in an evil—"thing."

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

The glory of a sacred edifice lies not in its vaulted roof and lofty spire, and pealing organ, but in the glory that fills the house,—the divine presence; not in its fabric of goodly stones, but in its living stones polished by the hand of the Spirit; not in its profusion of gold, but in the gifts and graces of the Spirit; not in its pointed windows, but in its Gospel light; not in its choir of singing men and of singing women, but in the music of well-tuned hearts; not in its sacred priesthood, but in the great High Priest. If every stone were a diamond, and every beam of cedar, every window a crystal, and every door a pearl; if the roof were studded with sapphires, and the floor tessellated with all manner of precious stones; and yet, if Christ and the Spirit be not there, and if the sacrifice of the heart be not there, the building has no glory. The house of God must have a

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glory beyond what Solomon's cunning workmen can give it, even the Lord God, who is "the glory thereof."

ACTIVE BENEVOLENCE.

Active benevolence affects our spiritual prosperity. Growth in grace stands indissolubly connected with practical piety. Doing good to others opens the windows of heaven, and brings showers of blessings on the soul, cheering as the sun and refreshing as the dew upon the tender grass. "The liberal soul shall be made fat," and he that "watereth others shall be watered himself."

It is that investment in the heavenly treasury which returns in due time with interest, into the Christian's own bosom. He that giveth to "the poor lendeth to the Lord ; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again."

It is the scattering which increases. To give, is to sow ; and as sure as we make a seed-time, so surely will God make a harvest follow ; for "God, even our God, shall give us his blessing." It is that exercise which creates an appetite for spiritual food ; which imparts sense to the spiritual system ; which advances all the parts of the new man in due and beautiful proportions. The true reason why there are so many dwarfs in the Church, who might be giants, is that they do not exercise unto godliness ; consequently, they have no appetite for the strong meat of the Gospel.

How many Christians complain that faith is weak ; their hope so faint ; their love so cold ; their confidence so feeble. The reason is obvious. They give themselves no exercise. It is only by active exertions in the cause of God and man, that they can go from strength to strength. The Christian character is altogether incomplete without active benevolence. The young man who came to Christ,

lacked "one thing." It was not amiability, nor humility, nor earnestness, nor simplicity, nor anxiety about his salvation; but he lacked benevolence, and so he lacked every thing, and could not enter the kingdom of heaven.

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Hope, apart from benevolence, is an anchor without a cable: peace, is a delusion,—assurance, the witness of the Spirit of Darkness transforming himself into an angel of light—and the end of such will be, they shall lie down in darkness and sorrow. Remember, that although all the promises of special enjoyments are free and gratuitous as grace can make them, yet are they ever annexed to good works.

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THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

It is a contradiction in terms to speak of the Roman Church, or of any other individual Church, as **THE** Catholic Church; just as it would be to call a part of the body, the whole; or to say of the people of any nation, that they are the human family. When we pray for "the Holy Church Universal," or Catholic, we pray for "all who profess and call themselves Christians."

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It is so constituted that it admits, yea, welcomes into its communion, all who will be welcomed into heaven. It is a Church which, like "the kingdom of heaven, is open to all believers." It is a Church which rejects not that which heaven will not reject, though heaven may reject some that it receives, because the chief Shepherd is an unerring judge; the under shepherds are rather teachers than judges. The Church in the world is the threshing floor, where the

chaff is ever mingled with the wheat. The Church in heaven is the garner, where only the wheat is gathered in.

The Catholic Church, is one which excludes no Christian, denounces no Christian.

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It does not destroy the catholicity of a Church to establish rules, rites, and ceremonies, provided that it "ordain nothing contrary to God's word written." Even in the Jewish Church, we find the establishment of courses by David; of the Feast of Purim after Haman's plot; of the Feast of the Dedication by the Maccabees; and of the Synagogue worship; none of which appear to have been of divine appointment, but as they were not contrary to God's word, they were honored by Christ and his apostles.

It does destroy the catholicity of a Church, to lay down any dogma, rite, ceremony, or worship, as a positive term of communion, which is not required in the word of God. Thus, that Church is not catholic which erects a stern, calvinistic standard; nor that which sets up a rigid, Arminian creed; nor that which insists upon a particular mode or quantity of the elements to be used in either of the sacraments; nor that which forbids the use of either of the elements, because there are thousands in heaven, who are neither Calvinists nor Arminians, Immersionists nor Romanists.

A true catholic Church maintains the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, adopts her rules of order from the word of God, and leaves disputed points to private opinion. It is not so lax, as to admit destroying heresies; if it be, it ceases to be a Church; nor so rigid, as to allow no latitude for diversity of sentiment; if it be, it ceases to be a catholic Church.

FALL OF MAN.

When he fell, his glory departed ; his understanding became darkened ; the will debased ; the conscience corrupted ; the affections enslaved.

Was he once like the Temple in its glory, a meet dwelling-place for the High and Holy One ? Now he is like the Temple in ruins. The altar is thrown down ; the tables of the Law are broken ; the sacred incense has become a noxious vapor ; the beauty of holiness has departed, and the house of prayer has become a den of beasts, which rob God of his glory, and man of his blessedness. Satan suggested ; man consented. As St. Chrysostom says of the temptation of the second Adam, so we say of the first, "He forced him not. He touched him not ; only said, "Cast thyself down ;" that we may know that whosoever obeyeth the Devil, casteth himself down ; for Satan may suggest ; compel, he cannot."

THE NEW BIRTH.

In order to make it in its nature and effects plain, we must recur to that awful event, by which corruption, sin, and misery, were entailed on all Adam's race.

No guilt was contracted by us in the fall ; the guilt of our first parents' sin belonged to themselves, consequently there is no removal of guilt in Regeneration. That is the appropriate work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor did the fall consist in the loss of any animal properties, consequently no new animal properties are communicated in Regeneration. Nor did it consist in the loss of intellectual faculties, consequently no new faculties are bestowed in this change. Nor did it consist in the loss of moral power, or those powers which constituted him in the

first instance capable of moral obligation, and rendered him an accountable creature, as the power to will, to love, to believe, to act ; so neither are new moral properties imparted in Regeneration. Wherein then did the fall of man consist ? We answer, in the perversion of the whole,—as an animal, he became enslaved to sensuality and lust ; as an intellectual being, he became earthly, vain in his imagination, exercising his reason only upon earthly objects, worldly maxims and principles, and for casual ends ; as a moral being, he became devilish. Satan became the prince of the world, and man his willing subject.

Now Regeneration restores man to his legitimate Lord, and directs him to the real end of his creation. In other words, he becomes *spiritual, heavenly, godly*.

REPENTANCE.

Repentance is Christ's forerunner in the work of grace on the heart ; and like the Messenger of Christ, it is a rough, austere, self-denying grace. It drives a man into retirement from a gay, giddy and thoughtless world, that in secret, where no eye can see him, he may pour out his soul by himself, saying, "O wretched man that I am !" "God be merciful to me a sinner." It "feeds him with bread of tears, and gives him tears to drink in great measure."

THE RESURRECTION.

The soul is not deposited in the body, as a jewel in a casket, that may be transferred thence and yet retain all its richness and lustre. Nor is the body moulded into its beautiful form, with members constructed as mere instruments by which the soul is enabled to act. Their union is

much more close and intimate. If one suffers, the other suffers ; if one rejoices, the other rejoices ; if one acts, the other participates. If the soul is the sinner, the body with its humors and appetites is the instigator. The two make one man, for good or for evil, and hence it would appear, that both must suffer, or both be blessed, (according to their united deeds,) to render the bliss or the pain of the other complete. Hence, it was the comfort of Job, that in his "flesh he should see God."

Again, if sin has brought ruin upon soul and body, it cannot well be denied that that which takes away the curse of sin takes away the whole curse. Wherever it has fallen thence it removes it. In other words, if the displeasure of God, on account of sin, has subjected the body to sickness, death, and corruption, and the soul to banishment from his blessed presence, to reap the reward of sin, in eternal sorrow ; then by fair parity of reasoning, that redemption, which extricates the soul from its part of the curse, must likewise set the body free ; else sin has brought in ruin, which the grace of God does not repair. But that ruin has been repaired, therefore, we look forward with confidence to the period, when our bodies shall rise from the dust, like the new heavens and the "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "Death shall no more have dominion over us."

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The Christian rises higher and higher through all the progress of his being. At first he is born into the world, heir to the common lot of all men. Then he is born again, "an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ." Then, his dying is another birth-day, when he is admitted into the world of spirits, and laid in Abraham's bosom. And then his resurrection is another, and his final birth, when his body is brought forth from the womb of the earth, and by the

mighty power of God, is caught up to the celestial city, and enthroned in immortal glory.

THE END OF THE UPRIGHT IS PEACE.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright;" keep your eye upon him; observe him; and if there be truth in heaven, "the end of that man is peace." His way may be rugged and steep, but it terminates in a green and flowery land, where "everlasting spring abides." His sky may be cloudy, but his sun sets clear, and gives sure pledge of rising in everlasting day. His life may be stormy, but he shall enter the desired haven under full sail. But are there no witnesses to this truth? Yes, we are compassed about with "a great cloud of witnesses." There is the "glorious company of the Apostles; the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs." There is Jacob, "a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief," but death gathered him to his fathers, in the kingdom above. There is Moses, the last forty years of whose pilgrimage lay through a waste howling wilderness, continually harrassed with a rebellious and stiff-necked generation; but he died in honor, and in peace, and Michael, the archangel, buried him. There was Lazarus, whose life was emphatically a life of evil things, but it came to pass when he died, that he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and there received beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. There is Stephen, sealing the truth with his blood, and dying amidst a shower of stones; and yet so peaceful were his last moments, that it is said, he fell asleep with heaven opening on his eyes, and his ears ringing with the melody of angels' harps. Who is not ready to be slain in view of the end of the righteous, "Let my last end be like his!"

JEWISH ORDINANCES.

We have but a faint apprehension of spiritual truths, except as they are conveyed to our minds through signs and figures. Heavenly and spiritual subjects are too vast to be comprehended ; too subtle to be perceived by our limited faculties, without the aid of symbols. Hence we see the importance of the Jewish economy to the Christian Church. Those services which kept alive their faith and hope, help our vision ; so that neither they without us nor we without them, are made perfect. I love to contemplate the pattern given on the mount to Moses. It assists my feeble powers to grasp all the parts of that vast and magnificent spiritual temple erected by a greater than Solomon. As an orrery indicates the position and the movements of the celestial bodies, and as a map delineates the surface of the earth, and both bring these vast and otherwise incomprehensible subjects down to our faculties, so the laws, services, and ceremonies of God's ancient Church, simplify and elucidate the more spiritual dispensation of the Gospel.

THE WASHING AWAY OF SIN.

Sin must be washed away, not covered. It must be washed away with blood ; not with tears ;—not with the blood of thy first-born, but with the blood of the well-beloved Son of God. His blood has been shed for this very end. His pierced side is a fountain, full and inexhaustible ; a fountain opened ; set open, left open, and open it shall be, and efficacious it shall be, until “ all the ransomed Church of God be saved to sin no more.”

But you must *wash* to be clean : and if, after guilt removed, you again touch the unclean thing, again and again prove its power. Let your morning and evening ablutions

be in this fountain. Let your deeds, both good and bad, pass through this celestial laver. None are of too deep a stain to resist its power: none so pure, that they can go up with acceptance to God, unless you bring them to the blood of sprinkling. "Our very tears," says Bishop Beveridge, "need to be washed, and our repentances to be repented of."

HEAVEN.

O blest abode! how my heart pants to drink thy waters; to eat thy fruit; to bask beneath the beams of thy sun; to hear the melody of thy music! In that garden, there is no sepulchre; no forbidden tree; no flaming Cherubim guarding the way to the tree of Life. No tempter or sin can enter there to mar its beauty, or infuse a dreg into its bliss. Could we behold but half the glory that surrounds the inhabitants of that world, how dull the glory of this would appear! The soul would cry out,—“Wo is me that I am constrained to dwell in these earthly courts! When shall I come to appear before God!”

DEATH.

Death possesses a kind of omnipotence and omnipresence. There is no hiding from his presence or his power. Health is no shield. The darkness is no hiding-place. The ends of the earth and the uttermost parts of the sea are not beyond his reach. Whither, then; wilt thou go? Where wilt thou hide? Go to death's conqueror; he hath taken away the sting! Cling to the cross,—there he is disarmed! Stand by the open door of the sepulchre, and ask, “O Grave, where is thy victory?” “The sting of death is sin,”

and Christ has destroyed its condemning power. "The strength of sin is the law," and Christ has satisfied its demands; and now, thou mayest take the monster death to thy bosom,—he cannot harm thee!

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The same power which transforms our nature, changes the character of death. That power which destroys the dominion of sin takes away the dominion of death; and that grace which takes away the guilt of our transgressions, takes away the sting of death; when we, through faith can say,—“Mine eyes have seen thy salvation:”—through the same faith, we may add, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!”

FEAR OF DEATH.

Strengthen yourself against the fear of death, by reflecting on the benefits of dying. Think on the day of death as a day of redemption from all the ills of mortality. Look upon death in the glass of the Gospel, not of the law. Remember that He comes by God's special providence. Remember that he comes with “length of days in his right hand, and in his left riches and honor.” Remember that he comes perfumed with the sweet incense of precious promises; “Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.”

UNBELIEF THE CRYING SIN.

With the Gospel of Christ, the case stands precisely the same as any cause in a court of justice. It is stated with the same precision and accuracy to every mind. The same weight of testimony is given to every individual, and if it be good, clear, and sufficient, a man of sound intellect and

unprejudiced mind is convinced ; whilst another of feeble intellect, though possessing the same evidence, remains unconvinced, and we pity him because it is his misfortune. But should there be a third, whose mind, under the influence of prejudice, or a worse principle, remains unconvinced, it is manifestly his *fault*, and all would with one consent condemn him. Angels receive all truth because their intellectual faculties are equipoised by holiness, and uninfluenced by fear, favor, or affection. Idiots receive none, because they are incapacitated by a disordered and shattered mind, and we pity them ; but the natural man believes not, because his mind is barred and bolted by prejudice, the love of sin, and enmity to God and godliness. Hence, unbelief is the crying sin of man, and has annexed to it the most awful curse: "He that believeth not, shall be damned."

HOLINESS.

Holiness takes its rise in the spring of love, and at its very beginning, divides itself into two great streams,—*this*, flowing towards God, in the various acts of faith, repentance, gratitude, piety, and complacency in the divine character,—and *that*, towards all intelligent creatures, in all those acts of forbearance, justice, truth, and benevolence, which characterise the man of God.

GRACES OF THE SPIRIT.

They are *all* found in every Christian, but they are not equally strong in all. As a child possesses all the parts and properties of the man, but not in the same degree of strength, so the individual who is but just brought to new-

ness of life possesses all the characteristics of a Christian, as really, though not as fully, as a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

GRACE AND NATURE.

Grace is the very opposite of Nature, and if we were to sum up the evidence of growth in grace, in one word we should say that it is to grow less and less like ourselves.

SELF-WILL.

Self-will is not less opposed to God than man. It is a spirit that would give laws to Jehovah himself; hence it murmurs at his dispensations, and rebels against his requisitions; but grace teaches him to submit to both, with a ready heart, and a willing mind.

FAITH A SPRING OF ACTION.

It is this which gives an impulse to the whole machinery of the soul, and keeps every wheel in motion. Without faith it is as impossible to please God, as it is for a watch to move right, before the spring is fixed. Motion may indeed be communicated to the several parts by an external force, but it moves not with the sun. It gradually abates its stroke until the impetus is spent, and then it rests until the impulse is repeated, and then it moves and strikes again, but it is as a useless instrument, a toy at best, fit only for a play-thing. Just so a man may be put in motion by another agency than faith, by interest, education, reputation, or pharisaic pride. A transient observer may be deceived, imagining that they derive their motion from

the actings of faith ; but the eye of Him who sees the irregularities of the soul, discovers that they move not by the Sun of righteousness. He sees a tendency to abate, and stop, until they are again put in motion by some selfish motive ; and thus they may go through their irregular round of duties, sometimes too fast, sometimes too slow, till life is ended ; and then, after that to be cast aside as worthless instruments, which have not answered the end of their creation.

* * * * *

If faith be the main-spring, devotion winds up the machinery, and keeps it in continual motion. It is as impossible for the soul to remain strong in faith, and active in obedience, without continued communion with God, the fountain of all grace, as it is for a clock to perform its revolutions, without being regularly wound up.

CHRIST PRECIOUS TO HIS PEOPLE.

Without Christ, the very promises of the Gospel are as grapes of Sodom : Faith is a broken reed, and the hope of salvation an illusion, but through Christ, the promises are "yea and amen ;" faith is omnipotent, and hope an anchor, sure and steadfast.

Now he who invests every other object with value, must himself be intrinsically "precious." If the stone could be found which would transmute all other substances into gold, it would be more valued than all gold. Such is Christ. What passes through his hands in a covenant way comes with a blessing upon it and in it. "All things become new." The good things of life are made better, and the evil things good. If He pour out water for us it becomes wine. If He break to us our bread, He makes Himself known in it. Yea,

if His hand lay a burden upon us, it is no more a burden than an eagle's wings. And this is not more wonderful, than that, by his power in the beginning, light should spring out of darkness, order out of confusion, beauty out of chaos, and all things that are out of nothing.

* * * * *

Then he is "precious" in his assumed nature, which is our nature. It is as Emmanuel, God with us, that he becomes most precious; for there we see all the excellencies of the divine nature subserving the interests of man the sinner; and there we see human nature exalted to affinity with the divine, and so God and man who were separated by sin, are reconciled by Christ.

Trace him in his assumed nature, and tell if ever such an one was born of woman! Ancient infidels testified,— "Never man spake like this man;" "He doeth all things well;" "I find no fault in him;" and a modern infidel has said, "If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage; the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."

CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

We wrestle "with principalities and powers." We have to contend with the Devil and his angels, who ventured a war in heaven; who encountered and overcame innocent man; who shrunk not from a contest with the Son of God himself; who more than once staggered the faith of the father of the faithful; and entangled "the man after God's own heart," in their snares; and caused the apostle who was firm as a rock to fall; and sorely buffeted the apostle of the Gentiles.

Let all, then, who are born from above, and are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and are enlisted under Christ's banner, look for war. Our encouragement is, that we have one

to fight for us, who was "in all points tempted as we are," and who successfully vanquished the tempter.

ETERNAL LIFE.

Life to come like wrath to come will be an eternal progression. The life of God in the soul by grace, insures to the soul life with God in glory; and life like God's. We have very faint conceptions of the full import of the word *life*. If the glorious light of the sun is but a shadow of God's glory, the life of man is but a shadow of the life of God. The life of a plant gives but a faint conception of the life of an animal,—and that of a brute, but a faint conception of the life of a man,—and the life of man as faint a conception of the life of God; and that life of God is the promise. What is that life? We can only speak of it with stammering tongues. None of the similies applied to life *here*, illustrate life *there*. Not a bubble, but substantial reality: not a drop, but an ocean always full: not grass, but a tree growing in the midst of the Paradise of God; not a vapor, but a sun lighted up at the fountain of light. It is not mere existence, but existence full of blessedness; life without a pang; life full of enjoyment; an ocean of bliss, without a drop of bitterness; and forever it will be—"life to come."

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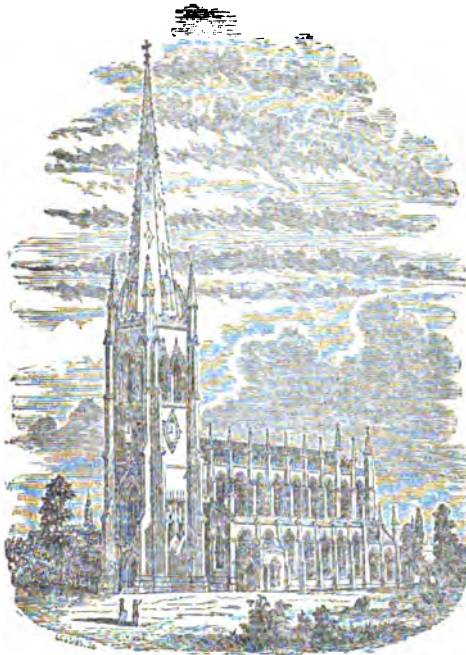
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